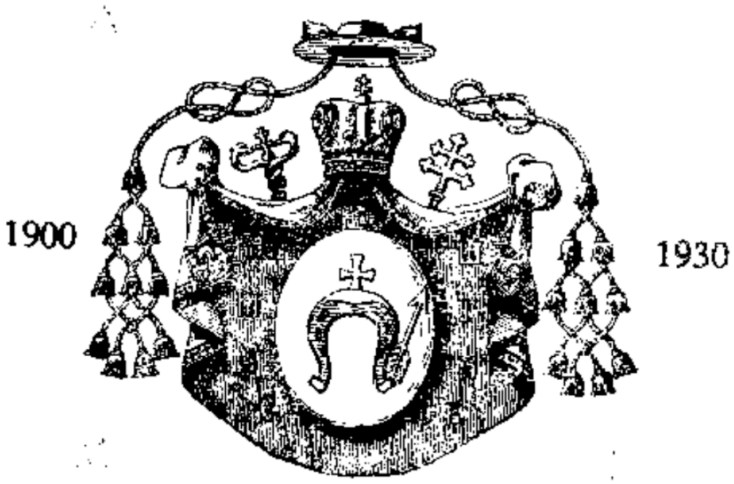
Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky



Daily Spiritual Wisdom

PREFACE

The Golden Tapestry of Faith

...Who would tell me about myself: how it is that within me so many incredible and wondrous things are interwoven; how so much that is paradoxical and contradictory can dwell within one single person? I am a mystery even to myself; and each day reveals to me ever new and deeper secrets within me. Whoever has profoundly known himself and the world, whoever has lived according to the conviction of faith, could explain to me what I am to do with all this. For me, at this particular stage of life, such a person proved to be Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky.

Once, quite unexpectedly, a thought illumined me—to arrange a small book containing the thoughts of Metropolitan Andrey for each day of the year. At that time I was engaged in entirely different matters and not even working in the Ukrainian language; therefore this idea truly seemed to me sent from Heaven. For, to speak frankly, we ordinary faithful, being far removed from his profound theological works, are not fully able to appreciate the depth of his spiritual legacy.

Indeed, many saints became widely known precisely through collections of aphorisms, maxims, parables, teachings, and narratives, in which the lofty level of thought, the depth of spiritual

experience, and the originality of imagery strike the reader with sudden force.

Thus, on this occasion I began to look at the works of Metropolitan Andrey with new eyes: I sought in them answers to concrete questions that trouble me in daily life. The tone of thoughtful wisdom does not merely captivate and persuade; it brings peace, for it offers a complete answer and thereby frees one from anxiety and unrest.

How many beautiful metaphors this new acquaintance with Metropolitan Andrey revealed to me! He says that when a person is born, the Lord binds that person's soul to Himself with a golden thread, receiving him as His child and asking only one thing in return—to live a Christian life. And indeed, how many of us, who have received holy Baptism, journey through the world with that golden thread? We are thousands upon thousands, and each of us, with our own thread interwoven with the others, forms a golden tapestry of faith stretched between heaven and earth. In this collection there are yet many other images and symbols that profoundly reveal the essence of the human vocation on earth.

Halyna Domanska
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JANUARY

СІЧЕНЬ

1. When the Lord God sends a man into this world, He binds him to Himself as with a golden thread, as with some strong chain—one end fastened to God Himself in heaven, the other held in the soul of the Christian. That golden thread, that holy bond which unites the Christian with God, consists in this: that the Most High God receives a man as His child, as His son. To man, as to His son, God gives from heaven His holy grace and all His gifts. And in return God requires of man that he keep His holy law in life and never do anything that would oppose the law of God.

All this is given through Holy Baptism. In it, precisely, that holy filial bond is formed between the Christian and the Lord God which unites them.

...Thus the holy thread is tied between God and men. It holds to God on one side—because what God has promised, He fulfills—and it holds to men when they do their part, when they honor the law of God.

2. Apart from the holy Sacraments and good works, there is no other road to God's grace except prayer.

3. Whatever else may be said, life is a kind of art—distinct from the art that consists in producing outwardly beautiful and good works. Life itself is an art, and its works are the deeds of the intellect and the will, of the whole human soul. As in the art of artists, so also in the art of the wise, a man can rarely rely solely upon precise reasoning and proofs; more often he must deal with experience, thoughts, intuitions, impressions—things that cannot easily be reduced to mathematical formulas.

As an example, let me recount what a great artist once told me. He was painting a genre scene depicting the interior of a room. In the room stood a table, and at the table sat various persons. The artist struggled with the thought of whether to place a flower vase upon the table. Several times he repainted the vase, and now there was nothing on the table. A picture dealer entered the studio—such men were often incomparable connoisseurs of art. He looked at the painting for a moment and, turning to the painter, said: "You know, I would advise you to paint a flower vase on that table."

A thousand times in life a man must himself follow such intuition; and, clearly, the ability to benefit from the intuition

of others is a great and very precious quality. Yet it is not certain whether the word "quickness of understanding" fully conveys the idea, for it primarily expresses the ability to grasp a matter and accept precise truth as presented by teachers. That is not quite the perceptiveness of which we speak. The question is rather: how does one express sensitivity to the insight, experience, or counsel of wise people?

4. Tell me yourselves: did you not hear in your heart the voice of God's grace when the bells called to prayer? Did not your conscience speak then, my dear brother? Did not your reason show you, clear as the palm of your hand, that the voice calling you to church, to God, was God's voice? Did you not understand that you had a holy duty to follow that voice? And if at times you did not follow it, did you not feel in your heart how God's grace and your own conscience reproached you for your sin—how they gnawed at you, rebuked you, admonished you?

5. Wisdom seeks the paths by which a goal may be attained. To it belongs all that a person can do by his own conduct in order to reach that end. Therefore wisdom must foresee the future goal and adapt present conduct to that goal. This foresight—which both pagan moralists and Christian

scholastics call by the same word used to describe God's governance, namely "providence"—this foreseeing of the future is clearly the principal act of wisdom, for upon it all its actions depend. Wisdom judges, advises, commands—and does all this by adapting fitting means to a fitting end. For both the end to be good and the means to correspond to it, there is needed, so to speak, a prophetic light that guides judgment, counsel, and command.

6. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who take darkness for light and light for darkness, who take bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

7. Whoever is conscious of human nature cannot fail to recognize that in his soul there is abundant matter for repentance and amendment. This is the alphabet of Christian psychology: there is no man whose Christian life stands upon any foundation other than repentance. There is no man who is not a sinner before God, who does not have the duty to repent.

8. These divine truths are so familiar to us, we have grown so accustomed to them, that they sometimes seem entirely known already. That may be so in our work with others, but it is not so in our work upon ourselves.

9. Indeed, faith itself gives us the strength to acknowledge as true what God has revealed; yet that very acknowledgment cannot exist without some understanding. It is enough if the understanding necessary for faith is like that of children. But without the help of faith, even such understanding is impossible. Without the help of faith, people ask with Nicodemus: "How can this be?" (John 3:9). To them applies Christ's word spoken to Martha: "If you believe, you will see the glory of God" (John 11:40). Without that faith, a person sees nothing, understands nothing. And even after one believes, one is still far from having faith even as small as a mustard seed (Matt. 17:20).

10. Weakness in faith is often caused by unclear or somewhat mistaken notions about faith. False notions about faith, when they are held consciously, may amount to outright heresy and can entirely destroy faith. But when such false notions are unconscious—when they are merely obscurities or uncertainties—they do not constitute the sin of unbelief and may remain in the soul alongside faith, even alongside living faith, that is, together with the virtue of love for God.

11. In life we constantly stand before roads that diverge in different directions, and we must continually choose between

two paths. Therefore, for Christian righteousness it is necessary and valuable to possess safe and reliable principles of choice. A choice is, obviously, more weighty the more pages of life it extends over, the more years it embraces. And when it concerns that choice upon which an entire future life depends—namely, the choice of one's state of life for a young person—that choice is, one may say, of absolutely primary and supreme importance. Hence, from the standpoint of wisdom, we must speak about choice—particularly about the choice of one's state of life. Yet in order to treat the matter of choice thoroughly, we must first examine all the faults that are opposed to the wisdom of life.

12. All true knowledge of the human person leads the mind into depth. From the external observation of sensations it leads to the conditions for knowing deeper meaning. Obviously, the light of our reason is finite; it is not infinite, but has its limits. Those limits extend farther the sharper and swifter the intellect is. The stronger the intellect, the deeper and farther it reaches. Yet there are realities to which no human reason can attain. Therefore, a person requires some supernatural understanding in order to reach the knowledge of those things that cannot be known by the light of natural reason. This supernatural light is given by the gift of the Holy Spirit which we call the gift of understanding.

That this gift is something distinct from faith may be seen, for example, in the fact that the Apostles already believed when Jesus Christ "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). From this it follows that one must first believe in order to understand, by this supernatural light, the truths of faith—according to the words of the Prophet Isaiah (7:9): "If you do not believe, you will not understand." It follows that faith is, as it were, the first virtue, together with the theological virtues whose object is man's ultimate end. Faith and all the divine virtues are more precious and more valuable than the gifts of the Holy Spirit; yet this does not prevent those gifts from having, as it were, their own almost infinite worth and beauty, and from being something about which one must think, care greatly, and for which one must often and earnestly pray.

13. That all unrestrained or ungoverned passions are in part the cause of faults opposed to the wisdom of life is evident, for the wisdom of life consists precisely in imposing upon the whole of human life the rule of reason. Therefore, all passions may rebel against that rule and give rise in the soul to resistance or lead it to actions contrary to wisdom. But the strongest among these passions, or the one most opposed to reason, is precisely lust. We call it the strongest because its disturbances most

powerfully shake the entire soul and thereby most darken the intellect.

14. "There are ways," says the Wise Man, "that seem right to a man, but their end leads to death" (Prov. 14:12). What, then, shall we say of the roads upon which a man sets out without even examining what appears before him? Such is the road upon which a man steps without attention and without reflection. If someone were to set out on a journey in such a manner, we would simply say that he had lost his mind. He goes and does not know where. He does not remember the goal and does not concern himself whether the road leads to any goal at all.

15. Cunning seeks out false and pretended paths toward some good or evil end. In this choice of paths one must distinguish between the planning of them and their execution. The planning belongs to the vice of cunning; the execution belongs to the vice of deceit. Deceit is, as it were, the carrying out of cunning—cunning applied in practice and brought into life.

16. There are people for whom religion is like an official uniform, worn only a few times a year at patriotic celebrations. Others, more sincere toward God, put on the uniform of Christianity every Sunday, but afterward place it back in the

chest and dress in different garments for the rest of the week. It must be said that such people are very difficult to understand.

17. ...The illness of the human conscience is extremely harmful also because it contradicts one of the important and obvious principles of Christianity. That principle is that all virtues and the whole of Christian righteousness must be composed first of all of the smallest and most insignificant things. By its very nature it is a mosaic made up of tiny pieces, of small sacrifices, of mortifications in little matters, of attention to little things.

This principle is very clearly expressed in the parable of the talents: "Well done, good and faithful servant," says the master, "you were faithful over a little; I will set you over much" (Matt. 25:21). And elsewhere Christ says: "He who is faithful in the least is faithful also in much, and he who is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).

God looks at the inner state of the soul, and in that state lies the entire value of a good deed. Thus the small coin of the poor widow is a greater gift than the richest offerings of the wealthy (Mark 12:42). But a conscience that treats small things lightly looks at them only outwardly, judges them by the human standards of this world, and remains far from God's judgment.

Moreover, our position before God is such that our service to Him consists precisely of small deeds. For we ourselves are small, insignificant creatures; therefore it seems that a necessary consequence of Christian humility is attentiveness to small things.

18. That a completed act of life-wisdom saves a person from sin seems an obvious truth. For if a decision is truly to be a decision, and a command truly a command, the virtue of prudence itself must reflect upon all the means necessary for their fulfillment in life. To find all those means and determine which are required for carrying out the principal resolution of life-wisdom—that is what choice consists in.

19. We must also adapt ourselves to Christian life in this: that the struggle against sin and evil must stand, in our understanding, alongside the highest aspirations toward evangelical perfection. Such is life: today, on the wings of faith and love for God, I rise to the third heaven; tomorrow, with broken wings, I fall as though into the abyss of hell. Today I lift my eyes to heaven and the heaven of heavens and with all the desires of my heart wish to be holy; a moment later I am convinced that I do not know how to keep even the most

essential commandments of God, or at least that I am exposed to grave temptations that lead to serious sins.

20. **When a person loves God, then everything that belongs to God, that leads to God, and that is pleasing to Him becomes dear to that person. Then God's word becomes precious and beloved, for through it one comes to know Him better; and God's Law, in which His will is expressed; and prayer, by which one converses with Him. Every human being also becomes dear, because in each one the person sees a child of God. Thus the love of God illumines a person's entire life—and above all it illumines relationships between people.**

21. **For the holy Apostle Paul, sincere mercy is the quality that must first manifest itself among Christians. It is like their garment: "Put on, as God's chosen ones, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility" (Col. 3:12). And Saint James does not hesitate to threaten judgment without mercy upon the one who has shown no mercy in life.**

22. **Love, in all the pure meanings of that word, is the only true good of human life. Without it, life is worth nothing. And the less love there is among people, the rarer the sincere diamonds of that divine light from heaven, the more carefully we must**

preserve and diligently seek everything by which even a small fragment of that diamond may be found.

Therefore, the ancient custom among Christians of exchanging festive greetings should be preserved—even though such greetings may sometimes become a tedious duty, an empty formality, or an undervalued courtesy; even though they may so often be insincere or Pharisaical. Yet within them one may at least occasionally find—and with good will one may also place—something of genuine goodwill and love.

23. The wisdom of life consists in loving what is truly good. Whoever could love only genuine good in this way would be the wisest and holiest of persons. And that genuine good is what leads to God. The greatest, most perfect, and real good is God Himself. A person who sought only true good would love God above all things. And when reason itself convinces you that God is so good and infinitely better than everything else that is good in this world, then you must love Him far more than all the goods He has given you.

24. The principles of Christianity stand above all divided human goods, above all partisanship; they strive to gather all people into one family and to introduce into the human race a universal harmony and concord. All social groups that represent

the interest of a single class or a particular segment of society cannot unite all people; therefore they often lead them into mutual conflict and, in their very principles, struggle not only against opposing principles but also against their adherents.

25. **Christian life itself draws us nearer to God; it is itself the continual strengthening of our hope. "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (James 4:8). If there is anything uncertain in attaining the eternal reward, it is only our conduct. We may refuse that reward and thus be deprived of it; but to will or not to will depends upon us.**

We may will it—and, fearing that our will might be weak or changeable, we may employ the unfailing means of prayer and, as Saint Augustine says, "do what we can and ask for what we cannot" (*On Nature and Grace*, ch. 43). It depends upon us, and not upon anyone else, to "make our calling and election sure through good works" (2 Pet. 1:10). And every good deed is unfailingly linked by God's own hand to eternal reward.

Christ assures us that even the one who gives a poor person no more than "a cup of water" (Matt. 10:42) will not go unrewarded. And the Apostle says that the reward surpasses all the possible difficulties and sufferings of this present life, and that every "light affliction of the moment prepares for us an

eternal weight of glory beyond all measure" (cf. 2 Cor. 4:17). Yet in no way may a Christian "boast except in the Lord" (cf. 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17). The Lord's grace toward humanity is so boundless that He has willed that what is His gift should also be our reward. And since "we all stumble in many ways" (James 3:2), let each of us always keep before his eyes both the mercy and goodness of God, and His severity and judgment.

Let each of us judge himself, even if he is not conscious of sin; for the whole of human life must be examined and judged not by human judgment, but by God's judgment. God "will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart; then each one will receive praise from God" (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5), for "God will render to each according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6; Council of Trent, Session 6, Decree on Justification, ch. 16).

26. All the greatness of the Christian, all his strength and all his worth, comes from faith working through love by God's grace. For what can a man accomplish by himself? Tossed about by every wind of often conflicting doctrines and teachings, he becomes a victim of human malice and cunning. Driven now in one direction, now in another by passions, he is enslaved by those passions and human weaknesses—without a purpose in

life, without a rudder on the boat cast upon the waves of the sea, without a guiding thought, without any notion of the grandeur and purity of life beyond the grave. Bound by selfishness, pride, and anger, he is often given over to deeds of which he must himself be ashamed.

Even when, through study and persistent labor, he acquires great knowledge, he remains ignorant of the one thing most important—the truth in which all fleeting, momentary fragments of knowledge are gathered into one synthetic whole of eternal and everlasting truth. Even when, by his noble and God-given nature, the unbeliever lives with the righteousness attainable to weak human nature, what is this in comparison with Christ, the Wisdom of God, who lives in the hearts of believers?

27. That guiding light of Christian life is further explained by the anonymous yet wise author of the Old Testament (Wis. 7:8 ff.): The sage valued her above royal thrones and regarded the greatest riches as nothing in comparison with her; he did not compare her with precious stones, for all gold beside her is but worthless sand, and silver is to be accounted as mud in comparison with her. He loved her more than his own soul and more than all beauty, and resolved to have her as the guiding

light of his life, for her radiance can never be extinguished... "Wisdom is an infinite treasure for men; those who acquire it become friends of God, commended by the gift of knowledge and understanding" (Wis. 7:14).

We seek her—the companion of life—without whom life has no worth and is only a burden. However much the human heart longs for her and strives toward her, it does not seek her for its own sake, for she is a gift and a grace of God; and to the one who desires her as holy from heaven, she appears as the greatest good of man—"that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen!" (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11; see also 1 Cor. 15:23; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:17; Jude 25).

28. The Gospel is the Way of the Cross to Mount Golgotha. Christian life is a life in which a person bears the cross, suffers, and follows Jesus Christ. It is a life in which the mortal human being is crucified to the world with Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14). It is a life lived in heaven, from where we await the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of His glory, by the power with which He is able to subject all things to Himself.

29. ...The Most Pure Virgin, working upon the faithful, brings them forth, as it were, in Christ. She works upon each of us individually; she works more than anyone else in the world, for she works by her prayers. And prayer is the most important and most effective labor for the salvation of souls. By this labor the Most Pure Virgin forms within our souls the life of Christ, the life of divine grace. Thus she, as it were, gives birth to Jesus Christ for us and within us. She extends His life to us and grants us that life. Therefore she loves us with the same love with which she loves Jesus Christ. She loves us, despite all our sins and weaknesses, for the sake of Jesus Christ. She loves us no less and works for us no less; she gives us Christ, as though giving birth to Him anew. And she does all this for us, out of love for us, because she loves us with the love with which she loves Christ.

30. I think that gratitude and thanksgiving are, for the Christian, something sacred and holy, a very important duty. Thanksgiving, like a sacrament, draws down grace from heaven upon the human soul. If we reflect upon this even a little, then every object that comes into our hands ought to become an occasion for some act of gratitude to God, who guides life along such paths that we continually encounter the benefactions of our neighbors.

31. Almighty and merciful God! I have had the terrible misfortune of losing the grace of holy Baptism. I know that the road of justification and the road of salvation are difficult for me; yet I believe in Your infinite mercy, I believe in Your awesome justice, and I desire to save my soul. And since the road to salvation, the road to justification, is the fear of Your judgment and Your punishment, through the Blood of Your Son Jesus Christ I beseech You: "Teach me the fear of the Lord" (Ps. 34:11), "Pierce my flesh with the fear of You" (Ps. 119:120).

FEBRUARY

ЛЮТИЙ

1. **...The common good makes of people one body, and precisely that common good is the foundation of all love. The sense and awareness of this common good that unites people leads a person to understand that the common good is his own good, and that his neighbors are, as it were, himself. Therefore, with the very same love with which a person loves himself, he must love all humanity.**

2. **Oh, how good is our Savior! What immeasurable love dwells in His heart! Such a heart we shall find neither in a mother nor in a father. Such a heart no brother nor even the most devoted friend could have for us.**

3. **Faith—even if not greatly enlightened—gives sufficient understanding of Jesus Christ to restrain a person from sin. "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' but does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says**

he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same way in which He walked" (1 John 2:3–6).

To attain a fuller understanding of the truths of faith, one must first rid oneself of everything that the Apostle Paul reproached even believers for: "For you are still carnal" (1 Cor. 3:3).

4. We have already seen that the sinner is represented first of all as a foolish man. Let us see to what extent this corresponds to the whole teaching of Holy Scripture. There we find frequent rebukes of people for their foolishness, and that foolishness always amounts, more or less, to one thing—namely, the state of sin. Thus the five virgins in Christ's parable are called foolish because they lacked the oil of God's grace (Matt. 25:1–13). The man who builds his house not on rock but on sand is called foolish (Matt. 7:26).

If we reflect on what sin is, we must admit that there is no greater folly. This can be affirmed in all the actions and functions of reason. Reason observes, penetrates into the depth of things, judges, and indicates what ought to be done. The sinner, first of all, does not observe. He does not see the promised goods or the threatened punishments; he does not perceive danger, does not recognize ingratitude, does not see where true happiness lies. From every side he may rightly be

compared to one who cannot see—to the blind. The words of the Psalm apply fully to him: "They neither know nor understand; they walk about in darkness" (Ps. 82:5).

The sinner judges everything falsely. He regards vain, temporal goods as something great and splendid, while he considers the eternal goods of the soul as nothing. He judges falsely about God, about himself, about his neighbor, and above all about the purpose of his life, thereby introducing into that life an incomprehensible chaos. "O sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity and seek falsehood?" (Ps. 4:2).

From this follow his constant false counsels: he gives bad advice, that is, he wrongly determines what should be done and wrongly chooses among the paths that life sets before him. He abandons God, the fountain of living water, and digs for himself cisterns in the mire. For a glass of liquor or a fleeting pleasure of passion he forfeits eternal reward and, like the man in our parable, takes his own life. One might add that the sinner is so constituted that at any moment, with the greatest danger to his life, he hurls himself headlong into filth, following the illusion of his imagination.

From this it clearly follows that he needs understanding as urgently as he needs salvation. And since the matter concerns supernatural life, a supernatural end, and supernatural paths to attain that end, he needs supernatural understanding—and that is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

5. The decline of faith begins with decline in other matters—with the loss of a good conscience. A terrifying example of this is found in the former Christians Hymenaeus and Alexander, about whom the Apostle writes to Timothy that "having rejected a good conscience, they have made shipwreck of their faith" (1 Tim. 1:19). In short, when we seek the cause of what can weaken faith, we find it in the entire moral structure of Christian life.

Only he who "walks worthy of the calling" (Eph. 4:1) and "bears fruit in every good work and grows in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering" (Col. 1:10–11)—only such a one truly "stands firm in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13).

To "stand firm in the faith" one must "watch, be alert, be steadfast" and live in such a way that "all things are done in love" (cf. 1 Cor. 16:13–14). In other words, the essential element of living faith is to fight against evil and conquer

passions within oneself so as to grow continually in faith and love. It is not without reason that the Apostle calls faith a shield necessary in battle: "Above all, taking up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Eph. 6:16).

6. We have become so attached to our way of acting—our sins, faults, and weaknesses—that what is sin before God is as if one were tearing one's own heart from the chest, as if crushing it to dust and breaking it.

7. The sin of Judas—as a deliberate rejection of God's grace, a turning away from Christ, and a betrayal of Him—is the type of the Christian's sin. In every sin of a Christian there is contained the essence of what constituted Judas's sin, namely the betrayal of Christ. Judas's sin was completed by sacrilegious Communion, which is the second principal sin of the Christian.

Sacrilegious Communion—of which Judas left us the symbol in his kiss of betrayal—is a sin possible only for a Christian and, in a certain sense, the greatest sin of a Christian, at least in its outward act. It is known that the greatest sin in general is hatred of God; yet sacrilegious Communion, as an insult to God who was crucified for us and a trampling upon His infinite love, is such an image—such, one might say, a symbol—of hatred

toward God that only the sinner's ignorance or blindness can prevent it from being exactly that.

8. The Holy Church advises, exhorts, and asks that we receive Communion and go to Confession at least four times a year, and commands it at least once a year. Whoever does not obey this command commits a grave sin through disobedience toward the Church and sinful indifference toward his own salvation. He sins against himself; he harms his own soul; he treats his soul as a person who gives poison to his body.

9. In reflecting upon scientific truths, the intellect may err in two ways: either by drawing false conclusions from true premises, or by proceeding from a false assumption or false premises and arriving at conclusions—even if those conclusions happen to be true. In the same way, the soul may fall into sin or possess a vice opposed to the wisdom of life either by pursuing a goal that is not a true good but only an apparent one, or by employing false and insincere means to attain some goal, even a good one. The first vice is the "wisdom of the flesh"; the second is cunning.

10. Even when the intellect does not err, the will can still at times evade what the intellect presents as good and instead seize

upon what it has grown attached to, even though it is not truly good.

Moreover, there are few things in this world in which the intellect sees the good so clearly and comprehensively that the will is necessarily drawn toward it. Often what is better for the soul is unpleasant to the body, and conversely, what pleases the body harms the soul.

11. From the lack of life-wisdom arises imprudence (*imprudentia*), whose forms include rashness (*praecipitatio*), thoughtlessness (*inconsideratio*), and inconstancy (*inconstantia*). Since diligence (*sollicitudo*) belongs essentially to the virtue of prudence, we must also speak of negligence or carelessness (*negligentia*).

Among the faults that imitate prudence are cunning (*astutia*), carnal prudence (*prudentia carnis*), deceit (*dolus*), and fraud (*fraus*). If we ask about the root of these faults or vices, we must say that on the one hand it is lust (*luxuria*), and on the other hand greed (*avaritia*).

12. Inconstancy consists essentially in turning away from one's good resolution. A person usually departs from his resolution because of disordered attachment to something; as long as the

desire of the soul does not alter the decision, he remains firm and resists the disturbances of passion. But when a person is unstable and inconstant, his resolution is so weak that he abandons it.

If a resolution is the completion of the act of life-wisdom, then the departure from that resolution must be attributed to the vice of imprudence. This vice indeed gains dominance in the soul also because of the lack of other moral virtues—namely, the lack of self-control or fortitude—yet it still belongs to the intellect: inconstancy is a vice of the mind.

A type of inconstancy is King Saul in the final period of his life, when he persecuted David. Convinced of David's virtues and fidelity, he would change completely from one moment to the next. A moment earlier he sought to kill him; the next, he spoke kindly and affectionately to him, only soon afterward to return to his hatred and again attempt to kill David (cf. 1 Sam. 26:1–16, 21–25).

13. Imprudence may be the cause of grave sins insofar as it involves turning away from God's rules—that is, either contempt for, rejection of, or neglect of God's law. But it may also occur without contempt for God's rules and without

violating what belongs to the necessary conditions of salvation; in that case it may be only a venial sin.

When we speak of the sin of imprudence, as with any sin, the human will must be free. It is not directed toward imprudence as such, for no one explicitly wishes to be imprudent. Rather, the will is directed toward an imprudent act: the imprudent person wants the action before reflection—an unconsidered deed. One might say he acts without sense or thought.

14. By contrast, a lazy person, sluggish in work, will be a burden both to his family and to the whole community. He will not only squander his property, but through laziness will eventually become incapable of work; for through laziness every sort of rot and moral impurity will enter his soul.

15. Let us imagine a person who awakens from a lethargic sleep inside a coffin. Whether that coffin is buried deep in the earth or placed in some underground vault, whether death will soon come from lack of air, or whether, having enough air, the unfortunate man will have to die of hunger—considering his situation from every side, let us imagine his impressions, his thoughts, and how he would act: whether he would try to save his life, attempt to escape that prison, or resign himself and accept God's will.

It is difficult to imagine a more dreadful situation—one that would fill the soul with greater terror. In such a condition a person might turn gray within a few hours. And yet the state of the sinner is a hundred times worse.

16. It is clear that the danger of a false trust in God's mercy—as a sin against the Holy Spirit—is greater for the sinner the more sins he has. One does not consciously commit that sin when a person thinks he has sorrow for his sins but in reality does not. Yet how slight the boundary is between true contrition and imaginary contrition, between authentic hope and exaggerated hope.

When we consider that the sinner—especially one enslaved by sensual sins—loses the spiritual taste for eternal goods and the spiritual awareness of eternal punishment; when we consider that all passions, and above all sexual passions, corrupt the health and strength of human feeling and cause a person to treat eternal and spiritual goods lightly, ceasing to regard them as difficult yet attainable goods—then we understand how easily a person may stray from the right path of hope in one direction or the other.

17. Greed also pushes people toward hypocrisy, cunning, deceit, and fraud. Daily experience proves this. It is self-evident

that all those faults of the soul which imitate wisdom are connected with all other passions and vices; yet without doubt greed contains a direction of the soul that most directly opposes the direction of life-wisdom. For greed concerns itself chiefly with a falsely understood highest end and with the means for attaining that end.

Just as life-wisdom seeks the path to attain the true end—eternal blessedness—so greed for earthly goods seeks means that lead to those goods as though they were the highest end. From greed, therefore, flow all those vices that oppose wisdom while preserving its outward appearance.

18. **Beware of sin against the holy faith; hold fast to the Holy Church. Just as betrayal of one's homeland is a crime, so betrayal of the Holy Church, our Mother—who leads us from childhood to the grave and extends her helping hand in every need—is a shameful offense. Remember that God has granted you the great grace of belonging to the holy catholic universal Church. Love her and be faithful to her.**

19. **A crime committed in the name of patriotism is all the greater a crime against the nation the more attractive it appears, the more it becomes a cause for praise and satisfaction over what is in fact evil.**

20. You must understand that disregarding the judgment and experience of elders means rejecting the authority of age and experience, and the collapse of authority is always dangerous. Whoever rejects the authority of elders will easily reject the authority of parents, and thereafter every other authority within the nation. In the end he will reject the authority of the Church, of God, and of all morality. The danger of such a path is more than obvious. Whoever rejects these authorities is left only with his own authority, or the authority of his party or clique. Does this not lead to complete anarchy?

21. And I say this to you who seek economic strength without morality, without God's law. Economic prosperity without morality is impossible, for it is impossible without social order; and there is no social order where there is no balance between rights and duties. And that balance does not exist where there is no ethics.

22. There has never been, nor ever will be under the sun, any teaching more fitting as a path to order and economic strength than the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For there has never been and never will be a teaching that so perfectly preserves the balance of rights and duties among people—one that so clearly defines the limits of selfishness and love of neighbor, that so effectively

resolves the difficulties of social life. Therefore, even if all of you, dear brothers, were wealthy, if you are not good Christians, your riches will not endure.

23. When we entrust ourselves to the Mother of God, we perform, as it were, an act of offering, completing it with a plea for help in life. When we entrust to the Most Pure Mother of God the needs of our neighbor, of the whole world, and even of pagans, we fulfill an act of love for our neighbor. This love strengthens our own petition for help and teaches us more fruitful acts of consecration—of our parish, our family, our household, and finally our personal affairs and needs.

In the life of every Christian there is a certain sphere, as it were priestly, in which each one is called to carry out priestly actions. Such a priestly act, accessible to every Christian, is to intercede before God for the whole world, to implore from heaven God's mercy for sinners, to rescue souls living in danger of sin through prayer offered on their behalf.

24. Faith that "works through love" causes the good deeds of the Christian to shine before others with a supernatural beauty, so that people, "seeing those good works, glorify our Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

In a majestic image by which the Apostle recounts the entire history of divine revelation, he presents the greatness of those who believed:

"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain... By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death... Without faith it is impossible to please God... By faith Noah, warned about things not yet seen, built an ark for the saving of his household... By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out... By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign land... By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive... Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand on the seashore... These all died in faith... seeking a homeland, desiring a better one, that is, a heavenly country... By faith Abraham offered up Isaac... By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau... By faith Jacob, when dying... By faith Moses... chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin... By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land... By faith the walls of Jericho fell... By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish...

And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the Prophets—who through faith conquered kingdoms,

administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received back their dead by resurrection; others were tortured, mocked, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn in two, slain with the sword; they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us" (Hebrews 11).

25. We have spoken of the differences between art and life-wisdom, yet this does not deny that life-wisdom is also a kind of art—an art of living, an art of right thinking. The works of this art may possess all the qualities of artistic creations.

26. There is no higher or more beautiful ideal for a Christian than to give one's life for the faith. Death for the faith is participation in Christ's sacrifice.

27. Great and rare is the love that gives one's life for a friend. But immeasurable and truly divine is the love that regards all people, and each person individually, as such a friend—that one would be ready at every moment and in any possible way to shed one's blood for him, that is, for every single human being.

A person cannot die twice a natural death. Yet God, who is able to work miracles, can devise some way—mysterious and so lofty that it surpasses human understanding—by which the sacrifice of death is repeated. And to accomplish this is the infallible sign of the greatest love—a love ready even for the sacrifice of life, a love raised to a higher degree as many times as that readiness for death is renewed.

With such love Christ loved humanity! Such is God's love for us! In every church—in every village and city—the unbloody sacrifice of Christ's death is renewed each day during the Divine Liturgy. And here all Christians—those who confess Christ, the Incarnate God, and receive His teaching—have a new proof of God's immeasurable love for mankind.

28. Of all that is human within God's supernatural law, mercy is the most human. It is a quality, a virtue, that stands on the very boundary—the first in the supernatural order and the most natural within nature. Therefore it is of extraordinary importance in Christian life. Through it the human mind takes its first step on the road to heaven. Through it the human heart, still attached to earth, begins to rise upward.

29. Every word of prayer is a door or a small window into heaven.

MARCH

БЕРЕЗЕНЬ

1. **...What would have become of me if Christ the Savior had not descended from heaven to earth? This is a profoundly grave question, my dear brothers—and one to ponder for a lifetime! If Christ had not come—if neither His teaching nor His holy grace were among us—then the world in which we live would look entirely different.**

It would look worse than the pagan world before Jesus Christ, when a husband could kill his wife and a father his children; when a wife and children could be sold like cattle—of course without punishment. Each person cared only for himself, devising how to deceive, exploit, or oppress another—or even enslave or kill him if necessary.

Imagine what a terrible hell such a world would be: no justice, no love—only injustice, bondage, tears, suffering, and misery. And who would suffer most in such a world if not the poor? He would have neither peace nor comfort. No one would see his tears; no one in the whole world would have mercy on him. Enemies would surround him. Even his parents and brothers would be his enemies, for they too would seek only their own

good, caring only for themselves and not knowing what justice is, what injustice is, what love is, what hatred is, what mercy is.

My dear brothers, if Christians truly understood what a great good all the ordinances of Christ are for them—and if they clearly saw the dreadful customs and laws of the non-Christian world—then with heart and love they would cling to Jesus Christ. They would understand that apart from Christ there is no life; that His words are true, that He is the life of men. Then it would not be easy to tear faith from such hearts. All Christians, as one man, would confess only the teaching of Jesus Christ.

2. To change a human heart, to turn it back to God—this is exceedingly difficult. My God, how hard it is to convert oneself to God; how hard it is to weep over oneself!

3. Improve your condition as much as you can, but do not complain against God's providence. Beware of the leaven of envy and coveting another's goods, for the Lord commanded: "You shall not covet your neighbor's goods." That means you may desire for yourself the same kind of good he has, but you may not grieve over his good nor wish to take it from him.

4. Concerning the folly that opposes divine Wisdom, Saint Paul says: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God" (1 Cor. 3:19), and elsewhere: "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him" (1 Cor. 2:14). We are not speaking now of that contrast, but of the folly opposed to life-wisdom—what may be called irrationality.

To understand properly all the faults opposed to life-wisdom, we must distinguish between those that arise from a lack of prudence and those that consist in a misuse of what prudence requires. In the latter case the fault takes on the appearance of wisdom—it pretends to be wisdom, or becomes a false wisdom.

5. Anxiety about daily bread may be sinful for three reasons. First, when a person makes temporal needs the highest aim of life. Second, when care for earthly goods becomes excessive—when it drives a person away from spiritual goods, which are first and more important. Hence Christ explains in the parable of the sower that "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word" (Matt. 13:22). Third, when anxiety stems from lack of trust in God's providence—producing unnecessary fear that even after doing what one can and must do, one will not have enough.

6. The deceit of riches is such a terrible poison that it turns those deceived into deceivers. Every passion leads to insincerity, but greed for earthly goods does so most powerfully. It produces, as it were, a double face, a double tongue, a divided soul wishing to serve two masters. Thus the lust of the eyes—this greed and lack of evangelical poverty—is the defect that most opposes the Gospel. In the Gospel we see that Christ's fiercest enemies were the Pharisees, "who were lovers of money" (Luke 16:14). Their hypocrisy and outward piety concealed deceit.

7. The state of God's grace in the soul is not diminished even by the greatest venial sins. Grace remains in its essence what it is and even increases through good works. Yet through faults and neglect of faith, evil inclinations grow within the soul, making it harder to live according to faith. Natural virtues—formed by one's own actions—can weaken as bad habits increase. Thus living by faith becomes progressively more difficult, until the will turns away from God in a serious matter and falls into mortal sin.

8. Sin is like a serpent that brings death. Sin is a deep wound inflicted by a two-edged sword, one that must be long and carefully healed.

9. Death is an image of sin; yet within death itself we cannot easily find an image of awakening from sin—that first moment when the sinner comes to himself and perceives his condition. Death represents that state from which there is no awakening—the "second death," the sin that will not be forgiven.

10. In the natural condition, even when the supernatural virtues of faith are infused, a person still retains human thoughts, prejudices, weaknesses, errors, and faults. Though sanctified by grace, human nature remains weak. Christ's reproach—"O foolish and slow of heart to believe" (Luke 24:25)—applies not only to the disciples on the road to Emmaus but to all human nature.

What most hindered faith was the desire for human glory: "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from God?" (John 5:44). The same weakness can become a path to losing faith. The road to the loss of faith passes through submission to the corrupt habits of fallen nature.

11. **...For individuals as well as for nations, the greatest misfortune in this world is the confusion of good and evil (cf. Isa. 5:20).**

12. **Fear of punishment—and even an initial fear of guilt—can lead a person to despair. Seeing his weakness, seeing the ruin to which his own conduct has brought him, the sinner who does not yet know how to rise above himself, who cannot in any step of his conduct transcend himself, may judge salvation impossible. Indeed, it is impossible for natural human powers alone. Faith rightly teaches that deliverance from sin lies only in God's grace, yet the sinner is not accustomed to making use of the truths of faith.**

13. **Thus we have, properly speaking, three kinds of fear: one evil and two good. Since servile fear—the fear of punishment—has been divided into two types, one evil and one good, theologians give the evil form a distinct name, calling it "servile-servile," that is, entirely servile: servile in its essence, in turning away from punishment, and servile in its manner, because it regards punishment as the greatest evil.**

14. **In our circumstances it must be considered a common phenomenon that people, poorly instructed in spiritual matters,**

do not regard it as an obligation to confess a sin if the confessor does not ask about it. Therefore a confessor who contents himself merely with the penitent's self-accusation and does not help him recall all his sins undoubtedly commits sacrilege, because he contributes to the unworthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance. Moreover, he commits another sacrilege by granting absolution while the penitent remains in a state of grave sin, that is, at the next confession so heard.

And the Christian who fails to confess a sin because the confessor does not question him can scarcely be entirely in good faith—unless he lives in a place where he has never encountered a true pastor and has dealt only with craftsmen of theology. The very fact that he confesses certain sins shows that he knows confession is necessary; therefore his silence reveals bad faith.

Furthermore, a priest who does not strive to complete the penitent's confession usually does not allow him to say everything and often rushes him. It seems hardly credible that, under even the most concise system of necessary questions, one could properly hear more than ten "annual" penitents per hour. That such confessions are usually defective is shown above all by the fact that they are rarely followed by true amendment of life.

15. **...In all the defects of false or pretended wisdom, the intellect retains its operation and health almost intact. One might say that the human intellect is a more faithful and capable servant when serving false wisdom than when serving true wisdom.**

16. **Lust is the root of all those vices that arise from a lack of life-wisdom or from the absence of the qualities united with it and required for its fulfillment. Life-wisdom, like every intellectual virtue, consists essentially in making the action of the mind independent of the senses. For the action of the intellect generally consists in transforming the material of sensory observations into spiritual thought and drawing from those sensory observations spiritual and abstract concepts.**

Therefore strong sensory impressions draw the soul away from the action of the intellect and pull it into the sphere of sensual life. The stronger those impressions, the more they divert the soul from thinking and reasoning, and the more they extinguish the light of reason. And since sexual impressions are the strongest among sensory impressions, they most greatly weaken intellectual activity and can even entirely extinguish the light of reason.

17. Beware of laziness. In every state of life, laziness is a contagion; it is the squandering of one's own good. Time for work is also a gift from God, and a precious gift. Through labor it may be turned into gain; through idleness and sloth it becomes one's own loss.

18. The liberalism of conscience also takes the practical form of disregarding small matters. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that this is the manifestation of that "spirit of despondency and negligence" for whose removal we so often and fervently pray. The spirit of despondency—discouragement, weariness, aversion to everything—appears when a person becomes insensitive to what he considers small. Likewise, the spirit of negligence, that is, indifference, naturally arises in the soul under the influence of all passions.

19. We may cite passages of Holy Scripture that point to the remedy for indifference, sloth, and spiritual sleep. That remedy is the fear of the Lord. Solomon says: "By the fear of the Lord a man turns away from evil" (cf. Prov. 15:27), and Sirach: "He who fears God neglects nothing." The fear of God awakens vigilance, diligence, and earnestness in the soul.

20. It is not that society happy and prosperous which has many theorists, but that which, in every respect, provides for itself and secures its own well-being.

21. The road to justification passes through hatred of sin. That hatred rests, on the one hand, upon fear—which is already beginning to be fear of sin and guilt—and on the other upon hope, which already sees in sin the greatest obstacle to attaining the desired good. Such a state already begins to approach love. The sinner may not yet have the strength for an act of perfect love of God, which even before the Sacrament of Penance would restore grace; yet as before sunrise the sky is illumined by the dawn, so before grace descends upon the soul, the soul begins to turn toward God. The Council of Trent calls this the beginning of love.

22. If someone were to say that a man buried alive and miraculously rescued would voluntarily seek again to be buried alive, no one would believe it. His situation had been such that one might say, "It would have been better for him to be drowned with a millstone around his neck." And yet, if a person justified by grace wishes to return to his former state, is this not a sign that his awakening and justification were only

apparent—insincere and false? He has not truly awakened from his lethargic sleep.

23. For unhappy sinners, have hearts full of mercy. Strive to cleanse your own sins through acts of Christian charity toward body and soul; teach your children to preserve innocence and to pray for the conversion of sinners. These are two of the most important—if not the most important—virtues of Christian life.

24. In the ancient pagan world there was a well-known dispute between two philosophical schools concerning what we call passion. In our language this word usually has a negative meaning, and thus, in a sense, common usage resolves—though not entirely correctly—the debate of the ancient philosophers over whether passions can or cannot exist in a good person.

The Stoics taught that a wise or virtuous man should have no passions at all. For them, virtue was a kind of complete impassibility. The Peripatetics, the school of Aristotle, taught that passions may exist in the soul of the wise man, but they must be moderated and brought into measure. The Stoic sect, founded by Zeno, achieved great success largely because of its theory of impassibility. In practice, however, that impassibility often resulted in indifference to human concerns—lack of

mercy, lack of compassion, lack of human feeling. The proud Stoic considered himself above others; the whole world scarcely concerned him.

The Peripatetics, on the contrary, held a more humane view. They guarded against excess, reflecting the Greek cultural ideal of measure in all things. Later philosophers sometimes reduced this apparent contradiction to a misunderstanding. And indeed, if by "passion" we mean disordered passion—one over which the will, enlightened by reason, does not rule—then we must admit that the Stoics were correct. True virtue requires ordering the passions and desires, ruling them by the will, and acting in the light of reason.

25. Just as the virtue of life-wisdom directs all the moral virtues by giving them the rule of reason, so imprudence lies at the root of every sin. For in committing any sin there must be some lack of the guidance of reason. Every sin is a form of unreason and arises from it; thus one may say that imprudence is, in a certain sense, a general sin. This does not mean that other sins are not sins in their own proper kind—such as theft, impurity, and so forth—but in all of them there is also a defect of reason.

26. Hope gives a person great confidence:

"Many say of my soul: 'There is no salvation for him in his God.' But You, O Lord, are my shield, my glory, and the One who lifts up my head" (Ps. 3:3–4)...

"I will not fear ten thousands of people who set themselves against me round about" (Ps. 3:7)...

"Arise, O Lord; save me, my God" (Ps. 3:8)...

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me" (Ps. 22:4).

27. Never be ashamed of your faith, even if you live among people who do not pray. Do not be ashamed to profess your faith openly through your daily Christian prayers. Even if you encounter those who mock you, courageously confess Jesus Christ, His holy Church, and the faith in which you were baptized and in which your parents raised you. People sometimes laugh at piety, but often—even when they laugh—they do so out of envy for those who believe in God and find in His holy teaching the truest and most enduring happiness of life. You may meet people who entice you to sin. Do not allow yourselves to be led from the right path. Only by fidelity to Almighty God can you merit His help in the difficult conditions of life.

28. We Ukrainians, perhaps more than other nations of the world, have serious and profound reasons to desire a just reconciliation among nations at war and concord in love among confessions that deepen divisions among people. Having faith in the powerful intercession of the Most Holy Mother of God, we ought more than anyone else, through our penance, good Christian works, and prayers, to implore from heaven her assistance for suffering humanity. To await help from heaven in some particular matter is, in fact, to entrust that matter in a special way to the heavenly intercession of the Mother of God.

29. The Gospel is God's heavenly book. It is filled with great and holy teachings that lift the soul to heaven, that teach the soul both to suffer with Christ and—with hope of eternal salvation—to rise again with Christ in grace.

30. From the very beginning, love grows in the soul—or, more precisely, takes ever deeper root within it. It does not cease to grow in this manner even until death. Yet this does not prevent there being different intentions and tasks for beginners, others for those advancing, and others for the perfected.

31. It is a fundamental truth of the faith that prayer is the most important of all works in the life of God. This truth is so basic that it ought to be placed among the principal truths of faith which even children must learn in the catechism—if it is not already implicitly contained among them. Prayer is the most important and primary condition of grace, the only path to grace. For more than thirty years I have taught Christian families that common prayer is the proper form of family prayer and an essential condition of a truly Christian family life.

APRIL

КВІТЕНЬ

1. **If a Christian does not know the faith, he does not know the road he is to follow. And if he does not love it and live according to its precepts, then—even if he knows it—it is dead for him; it is not his guide.**

He who does not know his faith is a Christian only in name, not before God. For a Christian is one who, with his mind, clearly acknowledges as truth all that Christ has revealed and that the Holy Church proposes for belief.

Comparison: Holy Faith is like a sacred chain that binds the Christian to God and draws him toward Him.

Therefore, the first and most important thing for a Christian is to know his faith. Yet, sadly, how many among you know little or nothing of it! It happens that a Christian grows gray-haired, stands already at the edge of the grave, and still does not know even the most essential truths of Christ's teaching. He knows nothing of his soul, of eternal salvation, of the grace of God that is necessary for salvation; nothing of sin, which drives that grace from the soul; nothing of Christ, who gives that grace and restores it to the sinner through Holy Confession and penance.

How can one not weep over such a person, seeing him draw day by day closer to the grave, yet unable to attain salvation—his eternal happiness?

2. Thus you become restless when you recall the teaching of God that awaits you; your hearts tighten with fear, your conscience gnaws at you, and you stand uneasy before yourselves, not knowing whether God, if angered, will easily forgive your sin and restore His grace.

Sin, my dear brothers, is like a terrible illness that corrupts the blood and threatens life until it is entirely driven from the body by medicine. There are illnesses that are not easily seen outwardly. It is said that when a rabid dog bites a man, the wound may heal and he may appear entirely healthy, yet the poison remains in his blood. After a long time it may surface, and then the man rages like a dog.

Every sin resembles such a bite from a rabid dog, whose poison enters the blood. Often after sinning, a Christian does not even think about what he has done—and sometimes even rejoices in it. Yet from that sin a dreadful poison has entered his soul, which at first he does not feel. Sometimes only years later it manifests itself in misfortune and divine chastisement.

3. God's gifts are placed within us as in a clay vessel. That vessel may be shattered at any moment by a single grave sin. For one mortal sin suffices to lose God's grace; and with grace is lost the whole supernatural life, divine sonship, the heavenly reward, and all God's gifts.

Mortal sin—what a calamity for the soul, what an infinite loss! Sin is a fierce and terrible death. Yet there is a remedy for sin: the Holy Sacrament of Penance. And one who cannot approach Confession may cleanse his soul by an act of perfect contrition—that is, sorrow born of love for the good Heavenly Father. All of us, whether we have confessed well or not, need this instrument of perfect contrition, so that we may be assured of eternal salvation even if, God forbid, we were to die without the possibility of receiving the Holy Sacraments.

4. Saint James addresses bitter and terrible irony to the man who does not live by faith: "You believe that there is one God; you do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble" (James 2:19).

It seems difficult to explain this except by saying that the angelic intellect understands from the arguments of faith that the truths of faith are true; and this natural recognition, which is like an acceptance of truth, Saint James calls faith. In any case,

his teaching is a sharp rebuke to those who have faith but do not live according to its precepts. He calls such faith a demonic faith.

Using theological distinctions, we may say that if such a person, from Baptism onward, has fulfilled at least the minimum required measure of his duties—that is, has not committed mortal sin and has not lost the grace received in Baptism—his faith is still alive, though scarcely manifested in outward deeds; it becomes dead only after mortal sin. Yet we must admit that even before mortal sin it was so weak that it did not preserve him from falling; before becoming dead, it was already a weak faith.

Perhaps Christ Himself would call such weak faith—faith that does not manifest itself in deeds—dead, just as He said that the Apostles' faith was smaller than a mustard seed and called weakness of faith simply unbelief.

5. It seems to me that a fitting image of sin and of the awakening from sin—possible for those who are still on the journey of life, approaching the moment of judgment—is the image of a lethargic sleep and awakening from it. Therefore, to understand this moment, let us attempt to enter into the impressions of a person awakening from such a sleep.

6. The state of the sinner is a hundred times worse. It is somewhat like the condition of those condemned to death who were locked for twenty-four hours in an underground dungeon in the presence of the so-called Iron Maiden. In Nuremberg one can still see that prison and that "eiserne Jungfrau."

After twenty-four hours, they would open the iron statue, place the condemned man inside it, and close the doors. In those doors were deep spikes that pierced the body; in the place of the eyes were the longest ones. To stand before death, to see it approaching and embracing one with iron arms; to endure the agony of starving death; to suffer the darkness of a dungeon or coffin and the suffocating lack of air; not to know whether the moment of death would come in hours or perhaps days; to cling to some hope of rescue that continually proves false—all this paints a death as terrible and dreadful as one can imagine.

7. We know, for example, that every sin awaits divine punishment; we know that for a single mortal sin God punishes with eternal fire in hell. We repeat these truths a hundred times to the faithful and thus are tempted to think that there is nothing new in them for us. We know them for others—but for ourselves, how often do we neither know nor understand them. If we truly understood even these truths in practice, would we

confess and weep over ourselves as we often smile and lightly regret our sins?

8. The custom of hearing the confessions of those who confess only at Easter contains the danger of forming in the confessor a liberal conscience. For even when he carefully hears the confession and asks the penitent all the required questions, by the very nature of the situation he is compelled to judge all venial sins as though they had no significance whatsoever. The Sacrament of Penance was instituted for repentance from grave sins; thus daily sins are not obligatory matter for confession. Yet to regard them as entirely indifferent, and even unintentionally to suggest such an idea to the penitent, would mean cultivating in oneself and in him a liberal conscience.

9. In the instability of the soul we see an example of how, under the influence of passion, the decision of reason changes—obviously not without the cooperation of the will. We have seen that the three stages through which the work of practical wisdom proceeds are: to deliberate, to judge, and to decide. Corresponding to these three acts of wisdom are three faults: rashness—against deliberation; thoughtlessness—against judgment; and instability—against decision. Clearly, imprudent conduct may arise from all three defects together.

10. Excessive trust in God's help springs from disordered self-love, which desires one's own good without regard to the order of faith and reason. Such, unfortunately, is our nature: we consider it possible to receive from others what in reality is impossible. In the sin whereby a person expects eternal glory from God without merit or forgiveness, without repentance, clear pride appears. A person elevates himself so highly that he does not consider it possible that God would punish him because of his sins or exclude him from eternal glory, even without merit.

11. The sin of excessive confidence in one's own strength is less grave than excessive confidence in God's help, for he sins more grievously who diminishes God's power than he who exalts his own. Yet excessive confidence in God's help is a lesser sin than despair, for it is more proper to God to forgive and to show mercy than to punish. To forgive is an attribute God possesses, as it were, in Himself; mercy belongs to God as something proper to His very being, whereas punishment pertains to God in view of our sins.

12. The sin of despair is less grave than hatred of God or unbelief. Those two sins are directed against God in Himself; despair is directed against God insofar as He is our good—that

is, insofar as we become participants in the divine good. It does not oppose the truth of that participation or of that divine good as such, but rather a particular application of that truth.

13. **You also have this fault: you too often wish to impose your own opinions and your own way of seeing things upon others, even at times by means of violence and blind terror. There is little among you of what earlier generations called tolerance. This is not exclusively your fault, Ukrainian youth. It is a worldwide current that has produced, on the one hand, fascism and the pronounced inclination toward dictatorship in many states, and on the other hand, Bolshevism. Such a spirit has swept across the world, and you are not to blame if, under its influence, even the most noble thought of love for the Fatherland and sacrifice for it sometimes withers.**

We did not know this imposition of one's own thought and will upon others. Were we mistaken in thinking that sacrifices which are not free have no value and are not true sacrifices? Were we wrong in believing that outside the atmosphere of freedom and voluntary personal will there is for humanity neither good, nor happiness, nor a future? Or in thinking that it is a sign of weakness when a person cannot persuade another and must

resort to coercion? Can slogans that take away freedom truly bring freedom?

14. Every so-called patriotic crime—precisely in proportion as it appeals to a poorly understood patriotism—becomes a temptation, a force that leads a nation toward a state in which the concepts of good and evil are blurred, confused, and even exchanged for one another. By that path, pleasing to a low, misguided, and merely emotional patriotism, a contagion spreads which consumes the finest and noblest national energies.

15. An immoral nation leads itself toward certain ruin. Impurity and drunkenness are a dreadful physical self-destruction; they are like a cancer that passes from generation to generation. The sins of people sometimes echo even in the tenth generation—in weakness, dullness of mind, and various illnesses.

16. Likewise, an economic order grounded upon an ethic regarded merely as a private matter of each individual—or nearly each individual—is impossible. Such an ethic differs from person to person and therefore lacks sufficient strength to maintain balance within society.

17. Let future generations take trade and industry into their own hands, for a society that lacks its own industry is always weak; a society in which foreigners conduct the commerce is poor.

18. The poor will always exist, and in our times their number has increased in an extraordinary way. The poor are not only those unable to provide for themselves in unforeseen cases of illness or old age; among them are many young people who cannot support themselves and their families through labor, either because they cannot find work or because their work is so poorly paid that, even with the best will and utmost diligence, they cannot sustain themselves and their families.

In such times the Church must remind the faithful of the principles of Christian justice. According to these principles, temporal earthly goods given by Divine Providence may indeed be and are the property of those who have lawfully acquired them. Yet ownership and possession must be distinguished from the use of those goods. As to their use, they are meant to serve not only the owner, but also those whom the owner is able to assist.

19. Wealth promises happiness but often brings misery; it promises life yet gives death. The deception lies in the fact that wealth appears innocent, appears as a good, yet leads to sin—and the wages of sin is death. The deception lies in presenting worldly goods as ends when they are only means. It lies in stirring up desires and presenting their satisfaction as the ultimate good. It lies in portraying this present, passing life as the true life of man—though we brought nothing into this world and can take nothing out of it. As a person came naked from his mother's womb, so he shall depart naked and carry nothing with him. The deception lies in promising help for life while actually becoming an obstacle to it. For life is nothing other than preparation for eternity.

20. How far that carnality may reach which hinders the understanding of divine truths, the Apostle does not specify; yet it must reach far indeed, if even the very bodily presence of the Savior was an obstacle to the fuller understanding of Christ's teaching by the Apostles. "You cannot bear it now... It is better for you that I go away" (Jn 16:7, 12). The food that beginners cannot yet bear is the "teaching of the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:13). It is given only to the spiritual and makes a person spiritual. As long as people do not yet understand it, they remain infants in Christ

and carnal—though still believers. For the Apostle, these two designations have the same meaning (1 Cor 3:1).

21. Hope is the source of the unceasing joy of the faithful: "My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation; I will sing to the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me. I will sing to the name of the Most High" (Ps. 12:6). It is the common hope of those who rejoice: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, persevere in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

22. And it is no wonder. A person's conversion to God—repentance even for lesser sins—is not a human work but a divine one. Yet God does not grant His grace in any other form than that of good thoughts and good will; therefore we must exert all our strength to cooperate with that grace. "God does not desire the death of the sinner, but his conversion and life."

23. As heaven is distant from earth, so far is the unbeliever from the believer. The believer surpasses human nature by an entire heaven—provided he possesses a living and strong faith (Jn. 3:16; 6:35; 6:47). Only such faith grants eternal life; only such faith saves (Jas. 2:14–15); only such faith passes from death to life; only such faith gives the "power to become children of God" (Jn. 1:12).

24. Love sanctifies the soul by directing the will toward God as its highest end. Therefore, even without the actual reception of the Sacraments of Baptism or Penance, it introduces divine grace into the soul and sanctifies it. The reason why an act of love can sanctify the soul before the Sacraments is that within that act there is implicitly included the desire to receive the Sacrament, even if it is not explicitly expressed.

25. God's promises are established in such a way that each person has sufficient reason "to hope against hope" (Rom. 4:18), as Abraham did when he accepted the first and most universal divine promise given to all humanity. Divine grace—the pledge of God's promises—is poured out so abundantly upon mankind that St. Paul could say: "If by the trespass of one many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound for many" (Rom. 5:15–16). To this superabundance of grace and gift, which bears no comparison to the magnitude of sin, the Apostle returns repeatedly: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20).

26. As He was dying on the Cross, Christ entrusted us to His Most Holy Mother and gave her to us as Mother. Even now from heaven she cares for us as the best of mothers, praying and

interceding for us, loving us with a true mother's love. What happiness for us poor sinners in this world—to call the Most Holy and Immaculate Mother of God our own Mother, to run to her in every need as a child to his mother, to know and remember that she cares for us and watches over us! Be proud that you are children of the Most Pure Virgin Mary.

27. Whoever has grown accustomed to contemplating the God-Man crucified for humanity—who daily beholds, as it were, His Blood flowing from the Cross—cannot but be filled with love for neighbor. And in conversing with Christ in prayer, reflecting on His teaching and the example of His life, the Christian adopts His way of seeing things. In this way he becomes like Him—and thus learns from Him to love others.

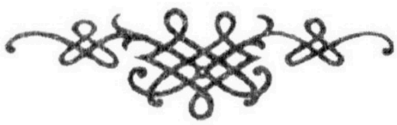
He learns to look upon the world with love, because in Christ's life and teaching he first sees love for mankind.

28. Prayer daily reminds us that without God's grace we can do nothing good; it reminds us what those good works are with which our life should be filled. It teaches us to desire this grace of God; and to ask for it is an excellent school of life and a school of prayer. It is like a daily preparation for the apostolic warning: "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor.

10:12). It is a lesson in humility—the treasury of all virtues; it is a source of divine grace and truly a door to heaven.

29. In this tragic and decisive moment of our existence, our entire nation must unite with the clergy and, together with us, solemnly consecrate to the Most Pure Mother Mary ourselves, our cities and villages, our homes and families, our immortal souls and suffering bodies, our children, our schools and works, our descendants yet unborn, as well as our material goods—our lands, gardens, and all other possessions. And this must be done not merely at the urging of pastors nor solely out of obedience, but consciously and freely, by personal decision and will.

30. In all the churches the daily Marian services are now beginning, which will continue throughout the entire month of May. Glory to Almighty God, who has granted us to see the feasts of Pascha, Bright Week, Pentecost, and these services in which, amid pain and suffering, we hasten to seek help from our Mother Mary.



MAY

ТРАВЕНЬ

1. Those who, after sin, turned back to God and became saints from sinners often spent their entire lives doing penance in fasting and prayer in order to repay the debt of temporal punishment owed to the Lord. There were servants of God who performed penance a hundred times more than was required. Thus they repaid God more debts than they had incurred. It is true that even today there are some who, through repentance and amendment of life, repay their debts themselves; yet it is also true that such people are now very few in the world. It requires great love of God and very fervent repentance for someone to find such grace before the Lord.

2. A life in accordance with the Gospel is a supernatural life of divine grace; it is a life of love for God and sacrifice for God—it is a life in which a person seeks and strives toward holiness.

3. Faith in the soul is something great, powerful, active—one might say dynamic—something that draws a person toward great deeds, great sacrifices, great thoughts. It separates him so completely from those who do not believe that between them there lies, as it were, an immeasurable abyss. And how could it

be otherwise? Whoever believes in Christ "has eternal life" (Jn. 6:47). "He who hears My word," says Christ, "and believes in Him who sent Me, has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (Jn. 5:24). The life of those who do not believe is a passage from life into death.

"Faith is obedience to the truth" (Gal. 3:1). The believer "knows whom he has believed" (2 Tim. 1:12), knows where he is going and how he must walk by faith (2 Cor. 5:7).

4. In the Decree on Justification of the Council of Trent, the Church teaches that faith is the first condition of justification. The Council speaks of faith that has not yet led to sanctifying grace—that is, of what we call dead faith. Only in Baptism does God infuse into the soul the virtues of faith and love together with supernatural sanctifying grace. Before that moment, in those who are to be justified, there is no virtue of faith; thus there is less in their souls than in the souls of sinners who already believe. In them there is only an act of faith—a thought that one can and ought to believe—and a passing light of actual grace.

Yet even that light can sometimes, with mighty power, draw a sinner out of the mass of perdition and rescue him from the death of sin. For this reason, such acts of faith are called salvific

acts. They do not merit anything, for merit requires divine love and sanctifying grace; nevertheless, they are salvific because they lead toward salvation, and they are supernatural because they proceed from actual divine grace.

Dead faith is a powerful and great gift of God, yet it remains bound by human passions, evil habits, and sins, which can multiply without limit and create ever greater and more terrible obstacles to the action of faith. Thus, in regard to the human soul and its spiritual powers, dead faith is still exceedingly weak.

5. In the moments before confession and during confession—perhaps even this morning—it seemed to me that it would be possible to live as I desired, that is, as a Christian. But when the wave of life struck me with all that it brings—its pains, its pleasures, its aversions, its tempting curiosities—it knocked me down like a small child, and now I lie in sin.

Is it a mortal sin? What happened the day before yesterday and yesterday—that impatience, those rash oaths (by which our people mean a kind of light imprecation, such as "by God," or "may God punish me," or a minor oath such as "I swear to God"), that harsh word, inattention in prayer, omission of prayer—all this may have been only venial sins, though who can be certain? But what happened today was clearly a conscious

and voluntary transgression of God's commandment in grave matter.

6. Yet even after justification, though already united with divine love, faith in the soul—indeed, that faith which, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ, even in the smallest measure, "like a mustard seed" (Lk. 17:6), grants a person something like almighty power—ought to give him strength to remain in the good. To persevere in the good is a lesser thing than to move mountains; therefore, if the sinner did not find in faith the strength to resist temptations and remain in God's grace, then he must have had a faith still living, yet incomparably smaller than the smallest mustard seed. Such faith might even be called dead, and one may wonder whether St. James would not have called it so, for to him faith without works is dead. Such, perhaps, was the faith of our sinner—even before his fall.

7. A purely theoretical truth—for example, a mathematical theorem—once understood, becomes immediately clear to us; we no longer need to persuade ourselves that it is so. But a practical, moral truth, which must extend its application to every act of our life, though well known in theory, may in practice remain very obscure. Therefore it requires reflection,

deep meditation upon those truths, in order to bring them from the sphere of theory into the living reality of our actions.

8. In all human affairs—in art, science, craftsmanship, or any professional work—one who preserves diligence and precision only "more or less" is a bungler in every task. And what is the work of a bungler worth, especially when his work is more subtle and more demanding than that of a lawyer, physician, surgeon, or oculist? Such is the confessor, pastor, catechist, or preacher who possesses a liberal conscience.

9. The danger lies in this: by becoming accustomed to a minimum of righteousness, a Christian adjusts that minimum to himself and demands from himself only that measure. It is not the place here to demonstrate that, with such a view of the state and needs of his soul, a Christian risks in practice failing even to attain that minimum. Therefore we must in no way limit ourselves to a minimum; we must strive for fullness and direct our attention, perhaps above all, to the greatness and beauty of God's teaching.

10. Negligence may be either a grave sin or merely a venial one. If through negligence a person omits something necessary for salvation—whether an act or a required circumstance—the

omission will be a mortal sin. Likewise, when through negligence the act of the will becomes so weak in matters concerning God that it withdraws entirely from divine love—such negligence is a grave sin, especially when it involves disregard for what pertains to God.

Yet negligence may also be only a venial sin, when a person neglects some act or circumstance not strictly required for salvation, and does so not out of contempt or indifference, but simply from lack of zeal—not from lack of love for God, but from lack of fervor in that love. Such deficiency will usually have as its cause some minor attachment or some everyday fault.

11. Negligence is often joined to sloth, which delays the execution of the will's decisions, and to spiritual drowsiness, which carries out those decisions without effort, without zeal.

And when today I think that tomorrow I must go to church, for it is a holy day, and I look into my heart—I see that the structure of Christian righteousness has been reduced to dust; once again I stand over ruins.

12. The first Christians abhorred avarice and condemned love of money; in this they had clear and fearful examples among the Apostles themselves. In the earliest history of the Church, amid

the radiant and wondrous memorials of love, sacrifice, dedication, and labor, there stands—as an eternal warning against greed—the tragic monument of Ananias and Sapphira, his wife, in the fifth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Love of money and grasping greed led them to become deceivers and to attempt to lie to the Holy Spirit Himself (Acts 5:3).

13. A type of inconstancy is King Saul in the final period of his life, when he persecuted David. Convinced of David's virtues and fidelity, he would from one moment to the next change entirely: a moment before he sought to kill him; a moment later he spoke to him kindly and affectionately—only soon again to return to hatred and the resolve to kill David (cf. 1 Sam. 26:1–16, 21–25). Likewise, the entire people of Israel serve as a type in this regard—the prototype of the Christian people and of the Christian soul. During the forty years of wandering in the desert, they constantly wavered between complaint and disobedience, and repentance and pleading for forgiveness.

14. And when you help the poor, remember that he does not need only your money; often he needs even more your active assistance, counsel, and consolation. Help the poor not merely from day to day, but, as you are able, help him in such a way that he may rise from poverty and stand upon his own feet. Give him

the opportunity to earn—teach him, show him how he might improve his own condition.

15. Perhaps, owing to our Slavic, more passive temperament, under the word "sorrow" we more often understand fear or sadness over what a person must endure or is enduring, rather than concern over what must be done and how to act. Thus it can hardly be said that sorrow is a virtue. Yet the unrest of concern of which we spoke is indeed a distinct virtue. The holy Apostle Paul is a classical example of that restless solicitude or anxious care. He speaks so strikingly of his "anxiety for all the Churches" (2 Cor. 11:28)... It seems that apostolic concern constitutes a characteristic mark of his great soul. Again and again he returns to the fact that "I had no rest in my spirit" (cf. 2 Cor. 2:13).

This virtue of restless solicitude is all the more remarkable in that Christ Himself did not possess it in that form. In Him, diligence and zeal never took on the character of unrest. Christ could not be anxious about what He would do, for He was infallible. In Him sorrow replaced that unrest. Thus He wept over Jerusalem, seeing the fruitlessness of His labor—or rather, the harm to the people despite His efforts and work.

16. Despair consists in contempt for God's mercy, upon which hope rests. False or excessive hope shows contempt for God's justice, which punishes the sinner. Therefore both despair and presumption concern God directly. There is also a false hope—or rather no hope in God at all—when a person expects to attain by his own strength what surpasses his power, deeming possible for himself what is in fact impossible.

But one also sins by false and excessive hope who expects from God what cannot rightly be attributed to Him—for example, that without merit God will grant a reward, or without repentance forgive guilt. Such a sin belongs among the sins against the Holy Spirit, for it disregards and rejects the help of the Holy Spirit who leads the sinner to repentance. By attributing to God what cannot be reconciled with His justice and wisdom, the sinner in a sense diminishes God's omnipotence and thus sins against God and against the truths of faith—though, as was said regarding despair, such false hope is not necessarily joined to a sin directly against faith, since it does not alter the general judgment of the intellect but sets up a false particular assessment in one's own case.

17. Such is my disposition and such are my thoughts that I always fear being ungrateful. Ingratitude seems to me the most

loathsome of all faults and sins by which we offend the Most High God and our Lord Jesus Christ the Savior. Ingratitude is the vilest and most repugnant aspect of every sin.

18. To one who, out of patriotism, calls for departure from the faith of the fathers, I must say, with the Apostle Paul, that he has zeal—but without understanding; that in preaching apostasy from the faith he sins gravely, incurs the penalty of ecclesiastical excommunication, and inflicts deep wounds upon our Church and our people, harming the very cause he would claim to serve.

19. I must be concerned for your bodily, physical health, my native people, for I know that only races that are healthy and physically strong can be happy; and I also know that health and morality are so closely bound together that each depends upon the other.

20. Yet even the sinner must desire life; he must wish to rise from his sins. And we, in working upon ourselves, must employ all our strength to stand guard over the work of our salvation; day by day we must strike our hearts with all the eternal truths of God.

21. "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with My Apostles" (Lk. 22:15), for at that Passover He was to offer the sacrifice of His life; at the final sacrifice of the Old Covenant He was to offer the sacrifice of His Cross of the New Covenant and replace the figure with reality—the figure of the lamb with Himself. And His desire for death was so immeasurable, so boundless, that as though one death were not enough; to satisfy the infinite love of His heart, there would have had to be endless deaths; to quench the fire of that love in His soul, oceans of blood would have had to be poured out.

22. Therefore, the virtue of love is the measure of Christianity in each person. Indeed, a Christian is truly imbued with the teaching of Christ only insofar as he loves his neighbor.

23. To explain properly what love is, one must first recall that within the soul there are two powers without which a human being would not be human and would differ in nothing from an animal. One power is the intellect; the other is the will. A comparison may help: in the body we have eyes and hands. We have eyes to see before us; we have hands to carry out the work that the eyes perceive. So too the intellect sees what is true and good, and the will acts upon it.

24. Every person has a right to love, a right to receive it from all others. An injustice is done when one receives too little of it. Likewise, each person has the duty to love others, and does them wrong if that love is withheld. I imagine that every person who has not received sufficient love in life is like a poor, sick child who has been wronged. It seems that every human being bears a deep wound from the lack of love received. Because of that injury so vividly felt in the heart, one would wish to compensate each person for it—to pour out upon them a generous stream of ardent love that would quiet their sorrow, warm them, and console their troubled and wounded hearts.

25. In our times and present circumstances, the difficulty lies in this: few possess an abundance of anything, while many endure extreme poverty, hunger, and even death from starvation. This is true. Yet precisely in such times almsgiving acquires incomparably greater significance than in times of general prosperity. Even the smallest gift takes on the value of the widow's mite, which Christ praised so highly in the Gospel of Gospel of Mark: "Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who contribute to the treasury; for they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on" (Mk 12:43–44).

26. Before His death, on the night when He was betrayed—or rather when He gave Himself into the hands of those who would crucify Him—at the Last Supper Christ instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood, the Holy Eucharist. He became for us Bread and gave us His Blood to drink under the appearance of wine. He fed us with Himself in order to sanctify and save us. The Holy Eucharist—what an infinite gift, what immeasurable good, what happiness to know that whoever eats this Bread and drinks from this Chalice shall rise with Christ to new and eternal life.

27. Having eaten the Paschal Lamb and thus concluded the Old Covenant, He proceeds to offer His own sacrifice. To draw all people after Him along the path He was about to tread, He first gives them a small sign, a symbol of what He would soon accomplish. By washing their feet He offers them an example of service to one another—an example reaching to self-humiliation and beyond. The disciples scarcely understood the first steps of this; even Saint Peter resisted. Yet they remembered His words recorded in the Gospel of John: "You also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (Jn 13:14–15). That example would lead them to the very end. In time they would understand that Christ did not desire to wash their feet with

water alone, but even with His own Heart's Blood. And thus, having shown them the way of the New Covenant—the new service of brotherly love—He proceeded to offer His sacrifice.

28. And how could I not love Christ, when He is for me Father, Brother, and Friend? When I owe to Him everything that I am and everything that I possess? How then, out of love for Him, could I refuse even the most difficult labor?

29. God could at every moment create new suns, new stars, and a new earth—so that He might give to each person for his use a world like the one on which we live and a sun like the one that shines upon us. Yet even then He would not have exhausted anything of what He Himself possesses.

And even if one were to multiply in thought everything that is beautiful and good, one would never reach anything so great and radiant as to be comparable with God. He remains infinitely and immeasurably better than all that He has created.

The human heart, from its very nature, is drawn to whatever is good and beautiful—even when that good is small, even when it is only apparent or illusory. If that is so, why should the heart not be drawn toward God, who is the source of all goodness and

who is Himself infinitely good and beautiful? And how, knowing Him as such, could one fail to love Him?

Indeed, a person who reflects on how deeply God has loved him and how much He has done for him—and who understands, even in part, how good God is in Himself—cannot but love Him.

Once one loves God, everything that belongs to Him, that leads to Him, or that is pleasing to Him becomes dear. Dear is the Word of God, through which one comes to know Him better; dear is the Law of God, in which His will is expressed; dear is prayer, by which one converses with Him.

Dear also is every human being, for in each one we recognize a child of God. Thus the love of God illumines the whole of human life. Above all, it enlightens relationships among people, leading them to mutual love—a love toward which they are already inclined by nature.

30. The Gospel is the path to heaven: a life without stain, without reproach, without defect; a life pure, innocent, and holy, in which a mortal person strives to rival the heavenly angels.

31. Among all the graces and heavenly gifts that we may ask for through the prayer commended by Saint James, the most important grace, the most precious gift, and the one most closely united with Divine Wisdom is undoubtedly the gift of prayer. Prayer is not only our duty, nor merely our right and privilege, nor even simply our first necessity; it is the most valuable gift that can and should be implored from heaven.

When Divine Wisdom enlightens our souls with its heavenly rays in response to our petitions, it may reveal to us the importance, the necessity, and the fruitfulness of prayer.

JUNE

ЧЕРВЕНЬ

1. **The Christian, reborn of water and the Spirit in Baptism, dead to every sin, crucified with Christ, who seeks not his own good but the good of others; who is pure from every stain of body and spirit and attains holiness in the fear of God and in the love of Christ; who, without blemish or reproach, partakes of the wondrous Mystery of Christ—His Body and Blood; who by faith lives in heaven, whose treasure and heart are in heaven, ready at every moment to give his life for the faith and for fraternal love, just as Christ loved us and gave His life for us—**

The Christian who mortifies his body and brings it into subjection through Christian courage and the struggle against himself; who, following Christ's example, becomes poor in spirit, meek and humble, hungering and thirsting for righteousness; who is pure of heart before God, merciful toward neighbor, a peacemaker and persecuted for his faith and piety; who walks in Christ's footsteps, bearing the cross upon his shoulders up the mount of Golgotha, so that both by life and by death he may bear witness to the truth; who bears on his body the wounds of the Lord Jesus and, in labor for others out of love

for them, sheds his blood in an unbloody manner, yet stands ready to shed it also in blood—

Such a Christian stands in the ranks of those giants of the Old Testament "of whom the world was not worthy."

2. The whole of Sacred Scripture speaks to us of that immeasurable divine love of which the Apostle Paul says that it "has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:5). Its infinite depth is shown in this: "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, now that we are justified by His blood, shall we be saved by Him from wrath. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom 5:8–10).

3. Forgetfulness regarding the things of faith is so closely bound up in the human soul with faith itself, following one upon the other, that even in a man of the stature of the chief Apostle Peter, moments of exaltation equal to a revelation from heaven were followed by moments of obscurity in supernatural understanding. We see how Peter, who had just confessed Christ as Messiah and heard from Him the blessed words, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matt 16:17), only

a moment later, for words spoken out of love for Christ, had to hear the severe rebuke: "Get behind Me, Satan… for you are thinking not as God thinks, but as men think" (Matt 16:23).

4. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matt 7:21). Here is the path to heaven, the path to holiness, for holiness is nothing other than the condition without which one cannot attain heaven. "Nothing unclean shall enter it, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev 21:27).

As all of us, without exception, are called to eternal salvation—invited, as it were, by God into His Kingdom—so all of us are called to holiness. This holiness is not our merit but a gift from heaven poured into the soul of every child at Baptism; it is sanctifying grace. It grows in the soul through every good work, every worthy reception of the Mysteries, and every devoutly recited prayer.

The Church publicly recognizes this holiness in every Christian. For that reason every Christian has the right to approach Holy Communion, and a priest may not refuse it except to a public sinner who causes scandal. The Church acknowledges this holiness also through the anointing of one who has lived a

Christian life but, being unconscious at death, cannot confess, and through the Christian burial of such a person—committing the body to the earth with prayers, incense, and holy water—thus recognizing even the body as holy.

This holiness, received at Baptism, is the smallest degree of holiness. It must grow as the person grows and develops; it grows through the fulfillment of God's will and observance of His commandments. Though God's commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3), and Christ's yoke is light, our weakness is so great that without divine grace we cannot accomplish God's will.

We carry the infinite treasure of divine gifts, sanctifying grace, and divine love "in earthen vessels" (cf. 2 Cor 4:7). Therefore we must both desire that divine help—without which we can do nothing good—and express that desire in prayer.

5. In order to pray well, one must continually read Sacred Scripture. Scripture must be read constantly for many reasons. Above all, the soul must be nourished by the Word of God; without such nourishment, it becomes barren and wild.

6. In its essence, the fear of the Lord consists in a person's submission to God and obedience to His commandments. For

this reason in Sacred Scripture the fear of the Lord is often joined with the keeping of the commandments. For example: "These are the commandments, that you may fear the Lord your God and keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you" (Deut 6:1–2).

7. How far can the understanding of the truths of faith extend? We have already seen the boundary: the Spirit of understanding cannot cause the object of faith to be known and seen as it is known in the light of eternal beatitude in heaven. Yet without crossing that boundary, the illumination of the Holy Spirit can, it would seem, grow without limit. Concepts enlightened by the supernatural light of the Spirit of God may take on in the soul a form so different and so far removed from what the same concept is in the mind of a person outside that supernatural light.

Restricting ourselves to those notions necessary for repentance, let us say that a concept such as sin can be joined in the soul with such profound sorrow that it pierces and consumes the soul to its depths. It may produce an impression best described as "hell in the soul." The same can be said of all concepts connected with sin.

This phenomenon is known in the lives of the saints: very pure and holy souls reacted in an immeasurable way to such notions. It is told, for example, of St. Catherine of Siena that she would faint upon hearing the words "lack of love" or "lack of divine grace." Something similar is found in St. Paul. Concepts related to pastoral ministry and apostleship made an overwhelming impression upon his soul. What else do we read in those passages about apostleship that, like lava from an erupting volcano, burn and blaze and tremble in his letters, so that one could almost fall ill from reading them? He finds no words sufficient to express the sacrifice of apostolic life. He casts together all that might suggest such sacrifice: "We are hungry and thirsty, poorly clothed, beaten, and homeless; we toil, working with our own hands… we have become like the refuse of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now" (1 Cor 4:11–13).

From such passages we may conclude that the very idea of his pastoral mission burned within him; it was a wound in his heart. Mystical theology teaches that love for God can take the form of a true wound, with real pain and suffering. It was precisely this understanding that drove him to such relentless labor—working day and night, exhorting, pleading, preaching at length, mortifying himself, disciplining his body, earning his

bread by manual labor. By all these efforts he sought, as it were, to quench the inner volcano that flamed within him. And that volcano was nothing other than his understanding of his mission—one single concept given by faith and illuminated by the supernatural light of understanding.

8. When we ask in what manner the Spirit of God leads His creatures, we must affirm that He leads them according to their nature. God governs all things in a way suited to the properties He has given each at creation. Thus, bodily creatures He moves in time and space, since their being depends on time and space. A spiritual creature He leads in time but not in space, for the soul is subject to time yet independent of space.

The human spirit is moved to action through rational inquiry and consideration of circumstances. Such inquiry we commonly call counsel. Counsel is given by one who seeks, through deliberation, the means to attain an end. In this way it may be said that the Holy Spirit also moves a person to action through counsel. Hence among the gifts of the Holy Spirit there rightly stands the gift of counsel.

9. Sacred Scripture contains countless descriptions of the person who has entrusted all his anxiety to the Lord: "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord; the Lord shall be his hope. He

shall be like a tree planted by the waters, that spreads out its roots by the river and does not fear when heat comes. Its leaves remain green; it is not anxious in the year of drought, nor does it cease to bear fruit" (Jer 17:7–8).

10. The intentions of divine providence are also called the counsel of God, perhaps because they open before angels and human minds new horizons previously unknown. Yet for the saints in heaven this unfolding never involves the uncertainty or doubt that precedes our knowledge of truth.

The gift of counsel in the saints may also pertain to the most effective means of attaining the ultimate end. They, too, through love, seek the glorification of the Most High and desire that we reach the goal they have already attained. Thus the prayers of the saints and the ministry of the angels assist us on our journey toward our final end.

11. It even seems certain that a person guided in life by the Holy Spirit and endowed from heaven with the spirit of counsel for his salvation will be a good adviser not only for himself but also for others. The words of the Prophet Isaiah concerning Christ—"the Spirit of counsel shall rest upon Him"—may well refer to this eminent quality of Christ as the supreme guide of souls. Isaiah also calls Him "Wonderful Counselor" (Is 9:6), and

our liturgical prayer names Him "Angel of Great Counsel." These titles point to Him as the perfect counselor in resolving the complexities of Christian life.

12. Christian devotion through the centuries has labored to render to Christ the Savior, both as God and as Man, the fullest possible honor. The Church established feast after feast in response to the piety of the faithful and to lead them to ever greater love for Christ. Naturally, the love of Christ the Man for humanity became an ever clearer object of Christian worship.

In meditating upon Christ's love, Christian souls—guided by the Holy Spirit who lives in the Church and leads human hearts to the knowledge and love of God—came to understand more deeply that love is the motive for everything Christ did for humanity. Love is the driving force behind all His actions. Since abstract realities become more accessible and concrete when represented by an image perceptible to the senses, the veneration of Christ's human love—and with it His entire interior spiritual life—took shape in the universal Church as devotion to the Sacred Heart of Christ, the symbol of His love.

Already from the thirteenth century, Christians honored Christ's love under this symbol. The Savior Himself, as though anticipating and fostering this devotion, revealed more fully to

the saints in mystical visions the "Heart that loved mankind to the utmost." Particularly full of warmth and love were the revelations granted to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque of the Visitation Order.

From the time of these revelations, devotion to the Sacred Heart—Christ's love symbolized in His Heart—spread throughout the Church like a mighty tree. Wherever it was embraced, it bore abundant spiritual fruit, inspired deeper love of God, and drew generous divine blessings. In a remarkable way, the faithful become attached to this devotion and draw rich graces from it.

13. Whoever has reflected even briefly upon the words of Jesus Christ concerning prayer cannot doubt that in prayer we truly possess the key to all the treasures of heaven and a certain and unfailing means of obtaining them. One might even say: the key to all the treasures of this world—understood in a Christian sense, that is, to all that is truly best and most precious in it.

Yet how is it that people so rarely attain these treasures? It is evident they do not, for they suffer, complain, endure misery, lose their reason in distress, and sometimes even take their own lives. Instead of a life that might be filled with blessings, they choose the worst of all outcomes—death without Christian

preparation, stained by a grave sin. They prefer that the memory of their act leave a permanent mark of shame upon themselves and their families rather than live a life ordered according to God's plan, strengthened by virtue and animated by prayer.

This shows that though people possess the key to the treasury, they do not know how to use it. I say they do not know—not that they do not wish to. For who would not wish to, if only he knew how? They lack light in the intellect. Therefore, for them and for all humanity, the most urgent matter is to know how to pray. If there existed a school in which one could learn prayer without excessive difficulty, surely every Christian would gladly devote some time and effort to such study. In fact, within Christ's Church such a school does exist.

14. **By God's grace, I wish to speak of the school of prayer established by Jesus Christ Himself when He gave us the miraculous prayer, the "Our Father."**

The Lord's Prayer is not merely a set of words or a formula; it is a holy institution, an establishment, a school equal in value to the other institutions founded by Christ. Before explaining what the "Our Father" means for Christians, we must first recall that every word spoken by Jesus Christ, though uttered in

human language, was the word of the Creator. Therefore, by the will of God, each word contained sufficient power to create from nothing millions of suns in a fraction of a second.

When we hear Christ's words in the Gospel, we must remember that in each of them lies an abyss of power, light, and holiness. Every word is wonder-working; every word commands the reverence of countless angels, who contemplate it and seek to penetrate its meaning. Throughout history, a single word of Christ has led thousands into the desert; another has called forth apostles to evangelize nations; another has shaken empires; another has shaped centuries of Church history; another has become the salvation of multitudes.

Perhaps only in heaven will we understand fully the power and weight of Christ's words. Even now, however, we glimpse something of their force. Christ desired throughout His life to lay down His life for humanity, for His brethren—because "greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15:13).

15. Grace sanctifies the soul in its very being and in the course of its history; love sanctifies the soul in its actions. For this reason, Sacred Scripture, the Fathers, and theologians rightly attribute all holiness of deeds to love. Together with love—like

her companions and attendants—there enters into the soul a whole series of supernatural virtues. Each of these, guided by love, advances and sanctifies particular aspects of human action. Along with love come the moral virtues, the intellectual virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

16. Closely united with the moral virtue of prudence is that gift of the Holy Spirit which the Prophet Isaiah calls the Spirit of Counsel: "The Spirit of counsel and fortitude shall rest upon Him" (Is 11:2). When reflecting on the gifts of the Holy Spirit—such as understanding and knowledge—we have seen that they are stable dispositions of the soul by which a person, sanctified by divine grace, becomes easily moved and guided by the Holy Spirit. The words of the Apostle Paul, "All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14), clearly indicate what these gifts are. They are qualities of the soul that enable it to be led by the Holy Spirit.

17. Counsel—that is, the investigation and weighing of arguments—concerns only the path that leads to the end, not the end itself. The will is directed toward the end insofar as it is directed toward the good, for we call the end "good" because the will tends toward it. The highest end of man—his supreme good—does not fall under deliberation, although intermediate

ends, which are also means to a higher end, may do so. Counsel concerns what we must do in order to attain the end. If an intermediate goal serves as a means to a higher one, it is not truly an end but only a stage toward it. We may deliberate whether pursuing such a goal is an appropriate step toward attaining the higher end. Saint Gregory of Nyssa expresses this succinctly: "Counsel is not about the end, but about the things that lead to the end. We deliberate about those things that we ourselves must do."

18. In analyzing the work of prudence, we have seen how difficult it is for a person to weigh all possible means with their circumstances, difficulties, and dangers when relying only on natural reason and moral virtue. In this demanding task, he receives powerful assistance from Almighty God in the Holy Spirit who is given to us. Observing uncertainty, doubts, numerous dangers, and the complexity of human decisions, a person recognizes the need to seek counsel from others, knowing that in many situations he is insufficient unto himself.

19 Indeed, Jesus Christ said: "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. And when they deliver you up, do not be anxious how or what you are to speak, for what you are to say

will be given to you in that hour" (Mt 10:18–19). Yet it is evident that by these words Christ does not forbid reflection on what one should do or say. Rather, He strengthens the disciples' faith in divine assistance under extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances—when they would stand accused on account of their faith in Him.

One would caricature Christ's words if one interpreted them to mean: "In such a situation, speak without thinking." It is true that there are moments in life when, despite reflection, searching, and even consulting the wisest of people, we still do not know what to do. In such cases, nothing remains but to lift our eyes to heaven, to God—as Saint King Jehoshaphat said: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You" (2 Chr 20:12).

20. It seems evident that the accomplished work of prudence saves a person from sin. For if a decision is truly to be a decision, and a command truly a command, the virtue of prudence must reflect upon all the means necessary for its realization in life. To discover those means and determine which are required to carry out the principal decision of prudence—that is choice. We constantly stand at crossroads in life, and we must continually choose between diverging paths. Hence, it is necessary and

valuable for Christian righteousness to possess firm and reliable principles of discernment. The importance of a choice increases in proportion to the extent of life it affects. When the choice concerns one's entire future—such as the choice of state in life for a young person—it is undoubtedly of the highest significance. Therefore, in speaking of prudence, we must speak of choice, especially of the choice of one's state in life; yet in order to treat this subject fully, we must first examine the vices opposed to prudence.

21. In relation to faith we speak particularly of the gift of knowledge. The gift of wisdom belongs more properly to the virtue of divine love, and the gift of counsel to the moral virtues. The gift of understanding perfects the virtue of faith: faith consists in assenting to the truth, while the gift enables the intellect, as it were, to penetrate into the interior of that truth. Thus the gift of understanding is that intellectual light of grace by which the human mind, moved by the Holy Spirit, enters more deeply into the truths of faith.

22. When we reflect on how Sacred Scripture describes the righteousness of Christian life and the qualities of a just soul, we encounter such a marvelous richness of attributes that together form the wondrous structure—indeed, the living

organism—of the Christian soul developing in divine grace. Scripture calls it a "building"; it may also be compared to an organism among other living forms, or even to a machine composed of innumerable wheels, springs, and transmissions of force—such intricate connections that, in contemplating this work which is the Christian soul, one discovers astonishing wonders of God's mercy and love alongside the frailty and short-sightedness of human nature.

23. The very fact that fear of the Lord is a necessary path to justification proves its obligation. It may be said that this teaching is divinely revealed and defined by the holy Council of Trent: that the sinner approaches justification through fear of the Lord. Sacred Scripture presents this fear very clearly as a duty toward God: "If I am the Lord, where is My fear?" (Mal 1:6); and again, "Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?" (Jer 10:7). We have already heard Christ's command: "Fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). Filial fear is so united with love that, as we have seen, even the saints in heaven—though secure from all evil—retain a reverent awe, since God infinitely surpasses the nature and comprehension of all created beings.

24. It may happen that perfect contrition, arising from divine love, itself leads a person to grace and obtains forgiveness. Yet the Church teaches that such full contrition has this effect only through the will to receive the Sacrament of Penance. This intention is naturally contained within perfect contrition, and to it must be attributed the reconciliation with God. Even when sin is forgiven before the actual reception of the sacrament, it is not forgiven apart from its relation to that sacrament; rather, it is forgiven precisely because of that relation.

25. Whoever witnesses the sufferings of others cannot but desire, even in a small measure, to relieve them. Who, seeing human affliction, would not envy the great Old Testament prophet Job? Who would not wish, after his example, to become a rescuer of the suffering and a helper of the helpless—"eyes to the blind and feet to the lame," a father to the poor, one who snatches the prey from the teeth of the oppressor?

26. In times when works of mercy and almsgiving become increasingly difficult, the Christian must all the more cultivate in his heart compassion and generosity—sympathy, desire, and willing resolve. Even if outward almsgiving must be small, let it at least symbolize what the person would gladly give if able. Perhaps the merciful God will accept even this modest offering

on account of the soul's inner disposition. One must guard against self-deception; yet, whatever the circumstance, even from one's last resources let a small offering be placed into Christ's hands. In times of general distress, this seems to be the only remedy.

27. If you knew the gift of God—if you understood what Holy Communion truly is—you would not approach it only once a year, but several times a month, or at least several times a year. In Holy Communion we receive the pledge of eternal resurrection. Whoever eats the Body of Christ and drinks from His holy Chalice shall live and rise with the saints to eternal blessedness. Whoever does not partake shall not see eternal life, but faces judgment and eternal condemnation. Can such a gift be treated lightly?

28. In order to fulfill the Third Commandment in a Christian manner, the people must understand what the Eucharistic sacrifice is and what participation in it means. Once they grasp this, they will understand what they lose and what harm they suffer when they are absent from the church.

29. Among the deep divisions that separate humanity into hostile camps, perhaps the gravest are the misunderstandings

and conflicts that oppose different confessions of faith. In such strife no human being possesses the key to resolution. No one by his own power can bring about religious peace. But if the Most Pure Virgin Mary takes this matter into her hands, then—and only then—may we hope for concord and love among peoples.

30. True gratitude is a remarkable virtue, for it inclines a person to repay like with like—and more. It moves one to give more than was received, for the Christian rightly understands that equal return is not gratitude but merely justice.

JULY

ЛИПЕНЬ

1. **All the wisdom of life consists in this one thing: to love what is truly good. Whoever could love only what is genuinely good would be the wisest and holiest of men.**
That true good is everything that leads to God.
And the greatest, most perfect, and absolute good is God Himself.

A person who sought only true good would love God above all things—for God is the supreme Good. From this it is clear that the most important divine commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart," is not foreign to us. By nature, the human person possesses an inclination that draws him toward what is good.

Since the Most High God is the highest good, this natural inclination draws man toward Him. Man lives and exists precisely in order to love God above all things. Therefore, the human heart does not find rest until it rests in God. And the more a person comes to know how good God is, the more he will love Him.

2. Whatever value we may assign to education or knowledge, the highest title of praise in our eyes will always be wisdom. A man who may be called—or even merely thought—to be foolish becomes an object of disregard, even if hidden, no matter how wealthy or powerful he may be. Neither riches, nor authority, nor strength can compensate for folly or replace wisdom. Without wisdom, power appears merely as a rare physical phenomenon; only wisdom is a truly impressive spiritual quality.

This judgment seems universal. Even those who measure worth by wealth retain something of this instinctive esteem for wisdom. Among us Ukrainians, the valuation of wisdom is so general and decisive that one might call it a national trait—and one of which we may be proud. Though we may be weak and poor, and though we have not produced world-renowned geniuses who have opened new paths for humanity, we nevertheless possess this one strength: the proper esteem for wisdom as it truly is. This quality can grant great force to our national life.

Personally, I would never hesitate, in the depths of my conscience, to give first place to a "wise beggar" over a foolish king. Not from asceticism or monastic ideal, but simply as a

man—I would always choose to be a wise beggar rather than a foolish king. And I believe that many among our people would judge likewise.

3. When does reason judge correctly? First, it must be free from false notions; second, the defects of the will and the disordered desires of the person must not exert harmful influence upon it. Often reason is occupied by prejudices that distort its judgment. Just as a crooked mirror reflects an image falsely, so a mind filled with erroneous concepts reflects principles in a distorted way.

Moreover, when the will and the passions are not sufficiently governed—when moral virtues are not rooted in the soul—they influence reason in such a way that a person judges as good what merely pleases his inclinations. Only a reason free from false concepts and from the domination of passion can judge rightly. This capacity may be strengthened either by habitual virtue or by divine gift. That virtue is called *synesis*—sound practical judgment.

4. Yet our reason is very weak. It lacks the power to grasp the whole truth and does not easily see clearly before it. Furthermore, it is wounded by sin—by that sin which entered human nature when our first parent, Adam, refused to fulfill

the will of God and thereby lost divine grace. From that moment, disorder entered the human soul.

Reason can no longer guide the will properly; it cannot unfailingly show what is good and what is evil. And the will, in turn, no longer knows how to follow reason faithfully.

5. Concerning the truths given to us through faith, two things are required on our part. First, that we penetrate their inner meaning and understand them; this is granted through the gift of understanding. Second, that a person judge rightly concerning the object of faith—that he discern correctly what must be embraced and what must be rejected. Right judgment in divine matters pertains to the gift of wisdom; in regard to created things, to the gift of knowledge. As for the application of these truths to particular actions, this belongs to the gift of counsel.

6. Right conduct requires attentiveness to what is being done. The intellect must examine the situation, assess it, and reflect before acting. Whoever neglects this proper consideration proceeds as though blindfolded. Even if he is not rash, he acts foolishly when he undertakes what he does not understand—what he has not examined. He might in a short time have assessed the circumstances and acted rightly, but he

fails to do so. By omitting this reflection, he also neglects what is essential in every Christian situation: hope for help from heaven. For only he truly hopes for heavenly assistance who has first done all that lies within his power. "Pray to God, but set your hands to work." To rely solely on divine help without making personal effort is to tempt God and renders one incapable of receiving the help promised from above.

7. It is known that there is a twofold memory in the human soul. One stores sensory experiences; the other preserves intellectual acts and acts of the will. Both are necessary for the virtue of prudence, which rests upon experience—both sensory knowledge of life and intellectual principles discovered by the mind.

Whether memory constitutes an integral part of prudence, as walls and roof are parts of a house, may be debated. Ancient moral teaching and scholastic theology regarded memory as an integral component of prudence and even spoke of a "virtue of memory." By this they meant the cultivated strength of memory that cooperates with prudence. There is no doubt that memory must be cultivated. A well-trained memory strengthens both sensory recollection and intellectual remembrance.

In the supernatural order, prudence must likewise be elevated by grace. Memory, too, must be sanctified by divine gift and thus becomes a component of that higher virtue.

8. There are situations requiring immediate action without preparation. In such cases one needs prompt orientation and quick insight into what is necessary. This quality may be called readiness or agility—what the Greeks termed *eustochia*, "happy guess." It differs from teachability. Teachability receives insight from others; agility discovers it within oneself.

A classical example of prudence—of that faculty which strikes at the very heart of a matter—is the judgment of Solomon. By the method he used to reveal the true mother of the child (1 Kings 3:16–27), he demonstrated the highest practical wisdom.

9. Saint John Chrysostom speaks beautifully of the superabundance of divine grace. We have been freed from the penalty of death, stripped of wickedness, reborn, raised up, redeemed, sanctified, justified, adopted as children, made brothers of the Only-Begotten, co-heirs with Him, united to His Body. All this, he says, Saint Paul calls an abundance of grace.

Christ repaid far more than we owed—more than oceans compared to a drop. What saved us? Hope in God and faith that He fulfills His promises. If that faith has already granted such goods, it will not fail in the future. Faith that transformed an enemy into a son will not abandon him.

Hope, Chrysostom asks, what is it? It is to think about the future with confident boldness.

10. Complete trust in divine Providence, free from anxiety, can at times produce extraordinary results. Many such examples appear in the lives of the saints. A striking instance from recent Church history is the "Little House of Divine Providence" in Turin, founded by Saint Joseph Benedict Cottolengo. What began in the nineteenth century as a shelter grew into hospitals, charitable institutions, religious congregations, and contemplative monasteries—supporting thousands solely through trust in God's Providence. The principal virtue of its leaders was unwavering confidence in divine mercy.

Such works stand as living testimony to the power of hope grounded in trust in God.

11. When a person commits mortal sin and loses sanctifying grace, he does not thereby cease to assent intellectually to the

truths of divine revelation. In his mind there remains agreement with the truths of faith, and in his will there remains a free obedience to God who commands belief in what He has revealed. A sinner, however grave his sins, does not cease to be a Christian so long as he does not fall into the mortal sin of unbelief. As the Council of Trent teaches: if anyone says that grace once received is lost only by unbelief and not by any other grave sin, let him be anathema.

12. In life it may seem that one who possesses sanctifying grace does not necessarily possess an enlightened faith or a deep understanding of revealed truths. For this reason the Church, following Saint Augustine, exhorts the faithful to pray for understanding of the faith.

13. Human life, directed toward eternal beatitude, requires even greater heavenly assistance than does the pursuit of natural goods by reason alone. Even in the justified person, though strengthened by supernatural faith, the intellect still requires the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to live fully according to faith.

14. Faith shows how "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31), for "our God is a consuming

fire" (Heb 12:29). Even before justification, when faith is not yet an infused virtue but only a transient act, its object contains truths sufficiently grave to awaken fear: hell, eternal fire, the abyss that opens beneath the sinner at death. Hence the Apostle: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12).

15. Divine mercy is so generous that it accepts as penance not only voluntary acts of mortification or sacramental penances imposed by a confessor, but also the temporal sufferings permitted by Providence. By patiently bearing the crosses of life in Christ, one can make satisfaction before the Father. Since life itself is filled with suffering, it is a grace that we may, through patient endurance, atone for past sins. As Saint James counsels, we are to accept trials with perseverance, knowing they produce steadfastness.

16. Illness, though permitted by God and capable of meritorious endurance, is nonetheless an obstacle to fulfilling duties and can become an occasion of sin. Conversely, immorality frequently undermines and destroys bodily health.

17. Natural qualities may become defects: energy turns into dissipation, zeal into harmful excess. In abnormal times such distortions breed division and harm both individuals and the

nation. With pastoral urgency, the author calls for reflection and unity, lest chaos overtake a divided people.

18. **Despair rests upon a false conception of God, though not necessarily upon a direct loss of faith. A person may retain the virtue of faith while losing hope. The general truths of faith remain intact in the intellect, yet the will, turned toward particular goods, becomes corrupted in its application.**

19. **What is often called "love" may in fact be selfishness. In such pseudo-love the neighbor is not regarded as brother but reduced to a means for personal gain. True charity seeks the good of the other; selfishness seeks only its own advantage.**

20. **Though faith in the sinner may be described as "dead," he is not wholly dead. He can still contemplate the abyss of eternal loss and perceive the gravity of sin, which opposes infinite divine goodness. Every mortal sin is, in a sense, a rebellion against that goodness—a renewed crucifixion of Christ within the soul.**

The passage concludes with a prayer: that God awaken dead faith, restore sanctifying grace, and guide the soul along the arduous path of virtue so that, once justified again, it may never lose the gift of divine life.

21. In the natural order, reason struggles against the defects of intellectual life; each growth in understanding and each acquired piece of knowledge dispels ignorance and error that limit the mind. When the supernatural order enters—when the life of grace and faith is given—it too must contend with ignorance and natural error. Even after sanctification by grace and illumination by faith, many weaknesses opposed to wisdom remain in human nature. Moreover, the supernatural light of faith must in a certain sense struggle even with the natural light of reason itself. For what is natural light to man can appear as darkness in comparison with the supernatural. As Saint John says of the Incarnate Wisdom: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (Jn 1:5).

22. Much sustained and fervent effort is required if we are to understand and rightly value what is at once the highest flowering and the greatest necessity of Christian life—prayer. No one overcomes sin who does not esteem prayer, love it, and practice it sufficiently. No one truly repents without begging for that grace. No one conquers temptation or avoids evil without asking for divine assistance. No one attains eternal salvation without imploring this gift. Prayer is the most universal and most effective path to grace.

23. In the Church of Christ there exists a school, and that school is the preaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the truths of faith—whether through missions, pastoral letters, approved devotional books, catechetical instruction in schools under episcopal authority, or the catechism taught within the Church herself. All must attend this school: priests and bishops no less than laypeople. Until death, all remain students there.

24. Christians who follow revealed truth are more inclined to give than to take. They not only refrain from harming others, but share their own goods. They understand that by doing so they secure eternal reward. Their love includes a rightly ordered self-love: they desire eternal happiness and the grace necessary to attain it. Such self-love does not oppose love of neighbor; rather, it rests upon it. For love of neighbor is the path by which Christians advance toward salvation.

25. Almsgiving is a true Christian virtue only when it violates neither justice nor charity. One must give from one's own goods, not from what belongs to another. Almsgiving transfers one's own property to the recipient; therefore, no one may give what he does not possess. One who unjustly holds another's goods must first make restitution. A debtor may not give alms while neglecting repayment. A child or servant may not dispose

of the goods of a parent or master. In extreme necessity, however, when justice itself obliges assistance, they may provide what is strictly necessary, provided the owner is informed or it is reasonably presumed that he would consent.

26. A diligent person has little time for sin. He is a good husband, a good father, a helpful neighbor, and a sound example. He is able to assist the poor, educate his children more effectively, and maintain order and eventual prosperity in his household.

27. The faithful must express their indignation toward the unfortunate victims of sin—not out of hatred, but out of love for their immortal souls. The Christian community should make it clear to murderers that it has mercy on them, yet abhors their crimes, and, as King David teaches, recoils from fellowship with such deeds. In the Psalm recited by priests at the washing of hands before the Divine Liturgy, David prays: "Do not sweep away my soul with sinners, nor my life with men of blood, whose hands are full of iniquity." He feared that sharing in the life of such men might bring upon him divine displeasure and punishment.

Saint Paul recounts a grave scandal in the Christian community of Corinth: a man living in sin with his father's wife. To rescue

the sinner and free the community from scandal, Paul commanded that the assembly, gathered in the name of Jesus and united with his spirit, exclude the offender—placing him under ecclesiastical censure, "delivering him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:1–5).

28. All Christians are conscious that the obligations of justice, mercy, and charity, embraced with the Christian faith, bind them not only in private life but equally in social life.

29. The common good unites people into one body, and this common good is the foundation of all love. Awareness of this shared good leads a person to understand that the general good is his own good, and that his neighbor is, in a sense, himself. Therefore, with the same love with which a person loves himself, he must love all humanity.

30. The teaching of Jesus Christ and of the Church contains universal principles that form the basis of solidarity among Christians, making the Church one united body. Christianity differs from other social doctrines in this: whereas those that represent only a part of society inevitably lead to conflict with other groups, Christianity is founded upon the universal law and doctrine of love.

31. Common prayer is the best means of sanctifying the home and the life of Christians.

AUGUST

СЕРПЕНЬ

1. One must prove Christian love through deeds. Any talk is empty if it is not followed by action, and assurances of love are even more hollow when deeds contradict them. Love consists in desiring good for others and, insofar as possible, contributing to it. Whoever truly loves cares for others; their good lies upon his heart.

2. The very fact that Christ attributes to faith such power—that even the smallest faith can move mountains—shows that He regarded even the Apostles' faith as very weak, though they lived in the state of supernatural grace and were not in mortal sin. Christ rebuked the weakness of His disciples' faith when He said to Peter, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:31). And when the Apostles asked, "Why could we not cast out the demon?" He answered plainly: "Because of your unbelief" (Matt. 17:20).

3. Christian love of neighbor does not seek personal advantage or qualities pleasing to oneself. Whoever loves in a Christian manner loves not for himself, but for the neighbor—for our common Savior Christ, for our common Heavenly Father.

4. Unhappy is he who has no hope. "Cursed is the man who trusts in man" (Jer. 17:5). "The hope of the ungodly is like dust scattered by the wind... like smoke dispersed by the breeze" (Wis. 5:15). Scripture repeatedly warns against placing hope in men: "Put not your trust in princes, in sons of men, in whom there is no salvation" (Ps. 145:2). What a person hopes for in this world often turns into harm, as Isaiah says: "The strength of Pharaoh shall be your shame, and trust in the shadow of Egypt your disgrace" (Is. 30:3).

5. Christ speaks here of false wisdom—the wisdom of which the Prophet Jeremiah said: "They are wise to do evil, but how to do good they know not" (Jer. 4:22). Even such false wisdom is a kind of intellectual strength. A power misused is not a virtue, for true virtue cannot be abused, yet it remains a quality—a sharpness, alertness, intelligence—that often places the "sons of this world" above the "sons of light" in their own sphere.

6. Venial sin leads and prepares the soul for mortal sin; therefore, it must be regarded as a danger and warned against: "He who loves danger shall perish in it." And: "He who is faithful in little is faithful in much." Especially when dealing with devout persons, one must teach vigilance regarding small sins. They may be encouraged to receive Holy Communion

without confession if conscience accuses them of no grave sin, yet they must understand the distinction between mortal and venial sin without ever trivializing the latter. With St. Basil one must ask: "How can that be small which is an offense against the Most High God?"

7. Every mortal sin contains a turning away from God, the supreme and irreplaceable Good, and a turning toward some created, passing good. The difference among sins lies in whether the primary element is the rejection of God or the attraction to creatures. Sins against the theological virtues consist chiefly in turning away from God. In others, especially those arising from bodily desire, a person may not consciously intend to reject God; the turning toward creatures comes first, and from it follows the rejection of God. Thus unbelief, hatred of God, and similar sins are graver than many others.

8. The gravity of the sin of despair lies chiefly in the false notion of God upon which it rests. Hope is founded upon the revealed truth of divine mercy. Already in the Old Testament God declares through the prophet Ezekiel: "I do not desire the death of the sinner, but that he turn and live" (Ezek. 18:23). The entire New Testament, the Passion and Death of Christ, is a boundless manifestation of divine mercy. Nothing is more false

than the belief that God refuses forgiveness to the sinner or is unwilling to draw him to justification by grace.

9. Opposed to despair is the sin commonly called excessive hope in God. More accurately, it should be termed the sin of false hope, for true virtue cannot be excessive; exaggeration entirely destroys the character of the virtue of hope.

10. The danger of false trust in divine mercy, as a sin against the Holy Spirit, increases in proportion to the sinner's guilt. A person may think he has contrition while in reality he does not, and thus fall into this sin without fully realizing it. Yet the line dividing true contrition from apparent sorrow, and genuine hope from presumption, is exceedingly thin. When a sinner—especially one enslaved to sensual sins—loses the spiritual taste for eternal goods and the sense of eternal punishment, passions dull his perception of what is truly grave and eternal. Thus he begins to trivialize heavenly goods and no longer strives for them as attainable though demanding realities. In this way, one may easily stray from the right path of hope, whether by despair or by presumption.

11. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," says Solomon (Prov. 1:7). Without entering into philosophical

analysis of fear as a passion of the soul, we may state that fear of the Lord consists in reverent acknowledgment of God expressed through observance of His commandments. People instinctively warn one another against sin by asking, "Do you not fear God?" According to the common conviction of all nations—as Tertullian observed—the human soul is by nature inclined to recognize the fundamental importance of keeping God's commandments. Solomon concludes Ecclesiastes, that meditation on the vanity of human striving, with the simple yet decisive words: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13). However lofty the intellect may soar in human or even divine speculation, it must ultimately return to this childlike truth: fear God and keep His commandments.

12. Not every component of practical wisdom has a distinct opposing vice, since one and the same fault can undermine several aspects of wisdom at once. For example, rashness—refusal to seek counsel—disregards both advice and the lessons of memory. Likewise, imprudence, which fails to reflect and deliberate, ignores circumstances and dangers, thereby rejecting foresight and caution.

13. Among the acts of reason upon which practical wisdom rests, deliberation is first. It is followed by judgment concerning the proper means, and only then by decision and choice of the appropriate course. That final decision alone is the proper act of prudence. Investigation and judgment precede it and constitute subordinate virtues, which in themselves may not yet produce true prudence. A person may examine all options thoroughly yet judge them poorly; or he may judge correctly yet fail in execution. Thus one might possess the virtue of counsel and even sound judgment, yet fail to arrive at the right decision that constitutes genuine prudence.

14. The gift of counsel is given to a person for his own life. Yet there may also exist a gift of good counsel granted not directly for the sanctification of the soul, but for the benefit of others. Indeed, among the charismatic gifts listed by the Apostle Paul in the twelfth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the gift of counsel is not explicitly mentioned. Still, it is at least plausible that a spirit of counsel may also be a grace bestowed for the good of the Church and of one's neighbor. In Sacred Scripture certain individuals are called men of good counsel—for example, Simon Maccabeus (1 Macc. 2:65).

15. To understand more clearly what the gift of understanding is in relation to the virtue of faith, careful distinctions must be made on both sides—on the side of faith and on the side of reason. From the side of faith, we must distinguish truths that properly belong to faith and entirely surpass the power of natural reason—such as that God is one in three Persons, and that the Son of God became man. Secondly, under faith also fall those truths that stand in relation to these supernatural mysteries, such as all that is contained in the divinely inspired Scriptures.

16. First comes the intellect, and afterward the will. If the intellect errs in some matter and judges poorly, it leads the will into error as well.

17. There are situations in which general rules of conduct cannot simply be applied. Sound natural reason—what is commonly called common sense—may indicate that applying a general principle in a particular case would produce harmful consequences or fail to achieve the intended end. There are cases in which a rule ordinarily valid cannot be applied without causing injustice or violating fundamental human sensibility. In such instances, one must appeal not to ordinary norms, but to a higher and more universal principle—perhaps less commonly

invoked, yet more authoritative—which requires a different evaluation of the matter.

18. Because His sacrifice on the Cross was to become the nourishment of humanity—so that men might draw life from it as they draw temporal life from bread—Christ took into His hands the symbol of that bloody sacrifice as food: bread. And because the sacrifice was to involve the shedding of blood, He took into His hands the chalice of wine. Wine, the blood of the noblest fruit created by God, which stirs and warms human blood, becomes the symbol of the Blood to be shed upon the Cross. He then spoke the words: "This is My Body"—"This is My Blood," giving them bread to eat and wine to drink.

Behold the abyss of power contained in each word of the Creator. By the force of those words, through centuries and across all lands, His Blood will flow in streams; generations will bathe in those streams; peoples will partake of that Bread and be nourished by His sacrificial offering. At that word, the sun might just as well have been extinguished, or millions of new suns brought into being; the earth might have burned in flames, or heaven descended upon earth. Yet none of these outward marvels occurred. Instead, something infinitely greater and holier took place: a new world was created—more worthy and

more splendid than all that had existed before. That world, largely hidden from human sight under the appearance of a fragment of bread, is the Most Holy Eucharist.

It is a world—indeed, worlds—for through it and in it humanity lives that hidden life which alone is true life. It encompasses heaven and earth; it brings forth millions of saints; it advances in triumph—though marked by traces of blood—conquering the earth and the universe. It is a world, though before our eyes the veil is only briefly lifted. It is the Kingdom of the Father begun amid the sweat of Gethsemane and the path of the Cross, consummated here on earth with the word "It is finished," which echoes from generation to generation, and after which begins the triumph of the Resurrection of all humanity renewed and sanctified in Christ.

Such is the power of the words of Christ.

19. The fatherland, after God, is for a person the most sacred reality; and love of one's country, after love of God, is the noblest, highest, and finest of sentiments. To wish to serve the fatherland through lawlessness is like staining a white garment with blood and mud, like casting blood and mire into the face of one's own mother. We condemn a crime because it violates the holiness of God's law—this is the decisive matter, for it breaks

divine right and is sin. Yet it also harms the national cause: it diminishes the virtue of patriotism, undermines the moral foundations of public life, and through scandal corrupts people—their conscience and their soul. It implants infection into the healthy body of national life, an infection that later devours that body, corrupting the youngest generations and transforming noble love of country into base hatred and malice, bringing shame and alienating others from us. A hundred times better to be the innocent Abel than to bear the stain of Cain.

20. And yet, despite daily experience, the illusion of wealth is so powerful, and the lust of the eyes makes us so weak, that among mortals only few do not succumb to it. Few are those who can assess earthly goods according to their true worth; many have two measures and two scales—one for time and another for eternity. Thus to most may be applied the words of Revelation: "You say: I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; yet you do not know that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich" (Rev. 3:17–18).

21. How much misery and suffering there is in cities—in basements and attics—and how much in villages, in poor huts that are falling apart. At times the poor must wander even

without a home, seeking nightly shelter wherever it may be found. What pain for parents to see their children hungry, destitute, or ill. What suffering it is to live in constant uncertainty for oneself, for one's children, for one's life or freedom. What a calamity is grave injustice inflicted by a stranger—or worse still, by one's own. What anguish are shattered hopes and the certainty of approaching death. What torment is that exhaustion of life in which not even a moment of rest is found. And finally, what sorrow it is to witness the sufferings of an entire people and hopes that remain unfulfilled.

22. The perennial teaching of the Catholic Church holds that there are two orders of knowledge in us, differing not only in origin or source, but also in object. One knowledge proceeds from natural reason; the other from divine faith. These two sources are entirely distinct, and so too are their objects. For faith makes known not only those truths to which natural reason can attain, but also mysteries hidden in God, which we can know only when He reveals them. The Apostle Paul teaches that even pagans can know God "from what He has made" (Rom. 1:20), yet when speaking of grace and truth that "came through Jesus Christ" (cf. Jn. 1:17), he says: "We proclaim God's wisdom in a mystery, hidden, which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age

understood… But to us God has revealed it through His Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" (1 Cor. 2:7–10). And the Only-Begotten Himself prays to His heavenly Father: "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to little ones" (Matt. 11:25).

23. Whoever has seriously reflected upon the luminous path of truth and goodness by which the Catholic faith unites people and leads individuals to salvation and nations and societies to well-being must acknowledge the obligation that all people of good will gather beneath the banner of Christ and, with united strength and in a Christian spirit, devote themselves to uplifting those who need help and encouragement, strengthening and preserving what is sound and good, and removing all that is harmful and dangerous.

24. Christian sentiment inclines each person, especially in difficult and grievous times, to cling more closely to God, to seek in Him consolation, help, and strength. It awakens almost unconsciously in the soul of every Christian. Thus it moves me, in these extraordinarily тяжкі часи, to address you with a fervent and earnest appeal—that the more burdensome and painful life becomes with each passing day, the more fervently,

frequently, and humbly we must turn to Almighty God in prayer.

25. **Various qualities or virtues are so united among themselves that they truly form one virtue, for which the most fitting name seems to be evangelical simplicity. This is the Christian ideal—to be like children, without deceit, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk. 18:16).**

26. **Aristotle (in Book VI, chapter 8, and Book VII, chapters 6 and 11 of the *Ethics*) affirms that "pleasures most of all corrupt the judgment of prudence." Comparing sexual incontinence with anger, he says that the man who fails to restrain anger still pays some attention to reason, though imperfectly; but the man who is unrestrained in bodily passion disregards reason altogether.**

27. **Only that society is truly rich and strong in which all, or nearly all, according to their station, are provided with sufficient means.**

28. **Almsgiving is an expression of Christian love of neighbor—a love that extends to all neighbors without exception, even to strangers, unbelievers, atheists, and enemies. "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him**

drink" (Rom. 12:20). Yet the giver of alms may choose among the needy those whom he wishes to help first. He may not, however, deprive others of his goodwill and love.

29. As He was dying on the Cross, Christ entrusted us to His Most Holy Mother, giving her to us as our Mother. Even now from heaven she cares for us as the best of mothers, praying and interceding for us with true maternal love. What happiness for us poor sinners on this earth to call the Most Holy and Pure Mother of God our own Mother, to turn to her in every need as a child to his mother, and to know and remember that she lovingly watches over us. Be proud, my dear ones, that you are children of the Most Pure Virgin Mary.

30. Hope is the cause of the unceasing joy of the faithful: "My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation; I will sing to the Lord who has dealt bountifully with me. I will sing praise to the Name of the Most High" (Ps. 12:6). It is the hope of those who rejoice: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, persevere in prayer" (Rom. 12:12).

31. Among pagans one might speak of a certain natural virtue of hope—a desire of the soul that turns toward the good insofar as human reason recognizes it as true and supreme good. In Christians, this natural hope is replaced by the supernatural virtue of hope. The light of reason is supplanted—or rather elevated and illumined—by the light of faith. Thus Christian hope is that desire by which the soul turns toward the highest Good, namely God, as a good that can be attained, though with difficulty, through the help of divine grace and on the foundation of divine revelation.

SEPTEMBER

ВЕРЕСЕНЬ

1. Whoever does not know his faith is only called a Christian. A Christian is one who, with his intellect, accepts as true all that Christ has revealed and that the holy Church proposes for belief. Therefore, the first and most essential duty of a Christian is to know his faith. Yet knowledge alone does not suffice. He must sincerely love it and live according to its demands, for the faith of a Christian who has no works of faith in his life is dead.

2. When the sound of bells spreads through the village, the grace of God seems to echo with it. That sound knocks at the door of every home and at every heart. In response, conscience—the voice of God within the soul—awakens and tells the Christian what he must do and what he must avoid. This divine voice is like the echo of grace, calling and inviting the faithful to every good deed and warning them against every evil.

3. The holy Apostle Paul says, not only in his own name but as though in the name of the Christian soul: "For I know whom I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to guard my deposit until that Day" (2 Tim. 1:12). This certainty of hope

may coexist with fear of punishment; yet as hope increases—growing in the soul together with love—that fear diminishes. To this certainty of hope is joined what St. Thomas calls a confidence in the reward.

4. The object of faith, as also of supernatural understanding, is always evidence of what is unseen (cf. Heb. 11:1). It must remain hidden and mysterious if it is to be "the substance of things hoped for," for one cannot hope for what one already sees: "For who hopes for what he sees?" (Rom. 8:24). Visible hope is not hope. Yet, beyond what is hidden by nature, the human intellect can understand much within faith; strengthened by the Holy Spirit, it may penetrate—not into the very essence of the hidden realities—but into the truths connected with them. Faith does not grant comprehension; it grants assent to all that God has revealed and that the holy Church proposes for belief. If the Church expresses the truths of faith ever more clearly, and if we now understand many matters connected with faith better than Christians of the first centuries, we owe this to the Holy Spirit, who bestowed upon the Fathers the gift of understanding—enabling them, as far as possible in this life, to enter into the interior of the truths of faith without transgressing the limits set by divine Providence

upon human nature, yet surpassing far beyond what natural reason alone, even enlightened by faith, could attain.

5. The doctrine of faith revealed by God cannot have as its aim the kind of development that various philosophical disciplines have—those which are developed by human minds. For the doctrine of faith is like a divine treasure, a divine deposit, which Christ entrusted to His Bride, the Church, commanding her to preserve it faithfully and to explain and teach it without error.

From this follows the necessity of absolutely safeguarding the meaning of the holy dogmas as once proclaimed by Holy Mother Church, and never departing from it under the pretext or appearance of some higher knowledge. Here it is fitting to cite Saint Vincent of Lérins (ch. 28):

"Let there be growth, and let there be abundant and vigorous progress in understanding, knowledge, and wisdom—both of individuals and of all, of each person and of the whole Church together—but let that development of the knowledge of faith throughout the ages remain always within the same dogma, the same meaning, and the same judgment concerning the dogma."

6. Divine wisdom, however one defines it, is like a teacher and treasury of all virtues and spiritual gifts. Therefore, under the guidance of St. Thomas Aquinas—whose theological school has been approved by the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiffs—let us review the virtues of Christian life for which we must daily pray, gathering them, as it were, into the form of divine wisdom. In this way we remind ourselves that Divine Wisdom either contains these virtues within itself, or leads to them, teaches them, and serves as a guide upon their path.

7. The infused moral virtue of prudence removes the habitual defect of thoughtlessness, yet not entirely. It removes the lack of virtue that a person ought to possess, but it does not at once eradicate the bad habit formed by repeated acts of imprudence. Only the acquired virtue of prudence removes that evil habit. Supernatural virtue, with divine grace and good will, can preserve a person from mortal sin to which imprudence inclines him. Thus it gradually weakens the vice and fosters the slow growth of the acquired virtue of prudence. The fundamental lack of prudence arises from original sin; grace heals this by sanctifying nature, yet grace neither changes nature nor uproots previously acquired sinful tendencies.

8. St. James writes: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting" (Jas. 1:5–6). The words "if any of you lacks wisdom" must strike the soul deeply—who among us does not feel this lack? Who would dare consider himself wise according to God? The measure of Christian life, of faith, of grace itself, is humility—and one must be strangely devoid of humility to imagine possessing divine wisdom. When we recall that these words are found in Holy Scripture—often difficult, often obscure, filled with problems beyond the resolution of even the most learned and holy theologians—we cannot but apply them to ourselves.

9. The teaching on poverty of spirit may be presented as a complement to prudence and as an explanation of what has been said about anxiety for daily bread. Poverty of spirit appears as one of the most foundational virtues in Christian righteousness—no less important than the other moral virtues. Christ begins the Beatitudes with the blessing of the poor in spirit, thereby presenting the entire pattern of Christian righteousness. The present difficult circumstances of the world also compel us to reflect on this virtue. Evangelical poverty

serves as the first and most important application of prudence to human life.

10. On the same principle by which we consult specialists in particular matters, so too in questions of prudence we must seek those who possess the greatest knowledge and experience in the art of living. When building a house, one consults a builder; in matters of health, a physician; in legal disputes, an advocate. In the most difficult of all arts—the art of life—each of us needs the counsel of those who have proven by their conduct that they possess true prudence. One of the chief principles of prudence is not to rely upon one's own wisdom, as Solomon teaches: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding" (Prov. 3:5).

11. With regard to the supernatural, the human intellect looks from its own standpoint; that is, even an intellect sanctified and elevated does not cease to retain its natural mode of operation. From that standpoint, the supernatural appears as something immeasurably distant. Even when, in the light of faith, the intellect accepts the whole truth of the supernatural, it will always perceive it, as it were, from afar.

Sensory observations and natural reasoning will always be incomparably more immediate, vivid, and close to it than the

world of the supernatural, to which a person is admitted by God's grace. In its perception and reasoning there will be something similar to the impression made upon us by suns that are very far from us. In our eyes they are only small luminous points in the sky, and at times even the most powerful telescopes are needed to establish for a person the mere fact of their existence. Through certain reasonings and the comparison of numerous difficult investigations, the mind may arrive at some knowledge that this luminous point seen in a telescope may be a sun immeasurably greater than the sun of our own solar system; yet it is so distant that it cannot make upon the soul the impression made by the sun of our system, which affects life not only through distant intellectual knowledge but also through frequent and powerful sensory impressions.

In the same way, the supernatural is for the intellect a distant point of light; nature is the bright sun

12. In Latin, the word *intellectus* is sometimes derived—whether strictly grammatically or not—from *intus* ("within") and *legere* ("to read"), meaning "to read within." According to this understanding, it belongs to reason to penetrate into the inner reality of things that do not outwardly manifest themselves. Sensory knowledge concerns itself with

external, sensible qualities; the intellect reaches the essence. According to Aristotle, its object is the essence—what a thing truly is. Beneath appearances lie hidden realities that human cognition must penetrate. Accidents conceal substance; beneath words lies the truth they signify; in an effect the cause is hidden, and in the cause the effect is contained. Thus whatever is outward and sensible belongs to perception; what is hidden and imperceptible is the object of intellectual activity.

13. One may indeed find a connection between all the intellectual gifts of the Holy Spirit and the intellectual virtue of prudence. Although purely intellectual, the gifts in some measure extend to practical life. Every intellectual quality inevitably overflows into practical reason. Among all the intellectual gifts, however, the gift of counsel most directly concerns the practice of life and is therefore most closely united with prudence. The spirit of wisdom, understanding, and knowledge illuminates life and moral virtue generally; but the gift of counsel applies itself immediately to practical decisions and thus has the most direct bond with prudence.

14. Counsel is needed even in matters where only one path leads to the goal, yet where that path may be pursued in different ways. To deliberate what to do is at times equivalent to

deliberating how to do it. We deliberate what to do when several means are available; we deliberate how to do it when there is only one means, but it may be employed in various ways.

15. Prayer is commonly described, following the teaching of Saint John Chrysostom, as a conversation with the Lord God. He writes that we are granted the great honor of speaking with God, with Christ, as with a friend—sharing our desires and petitions. Prayer indeed deserves this title, for not only do we speak to God, but God speaks to our soul. In prayer a relationship is established between the human soul and our heavenly Father, the Most Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the holy Angels, and the Saints. It is a mutual exchange, in which something of the intellect and will is given and received. Yet for the present, let us consider prayer simply as the elevation of mind and heart to God.

16. I open Sacred Scripture at random and read: "Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:27). I did not search for the passage; I opened the book by chance. Yet let the words "guilty of the Body and Blood" fall upon the soul with the light of the supernatural Spirit of God—the Spirit of understanding—and they suffice to become martyrdom,

torment, purgatory, or even hell itself: a burning wound, an unbearable pain. The soul discovers within itself the trace of Christ's Blood profaned by its own sacrilege. "He eats and drinks judgment upon himself" (1 Cor. 11:29). A single understood word becomes like a terrible judgment within the soul. Before understanding, one drank iniquity like water; after understanding, one is seized by anguish, feeling as though consumed by inward fire. Such is the horror of offending the Most High God. If faith in the soul of the sufferer produced nothing even remotely similar to such an impression, then that faith was dead and blind.

17. The object of fear is evil, yet evil can be feared in two ways: either as the evil from which one flees, or as that from which evil may come. God, as infinite goodness, cannot be feared in the first sense. Yet He may be feared in the second sense, insofar as punishment proceeds from Him, and guilt separates man from Him. The evil of punishment is only partial and apparent, depriving man of some limited good. Absolute evil is that which separates man from his final end—God Himself.

18. The gift of counsel does not cease when the pilgrims reach the goal of eternal blessedness. Even in heaven, God continues to move the minds of the blessed toward what they are to do. They

are led by the Holy Spirit even more perfectly than the faithful on earth. What falls away is only the imperfection of our present condition. God guides the blessed not by leading them from ignorance to knowledge or from doubt to certainty, but by deepening their already possessed knowledge and unveiling ever new aspects of His providence. Their ignorance is simple non-possession of knowledge, whereas ours is often the result of weakness, fault, or punishment.

19. **The absence of prudence is a defect only when one lacks the prudence that one could and should possess. In children such lack is not a fault. It becomes a fault in those who neglect to cultivate prudence or to ask for its gift from heaven. Folly is not merely the absence of prudence; it is the habitual practice of actions contrary to it. Where prudence seeks counsel and listens willingly, the foolish man despises advice and sets up rules opposed to wisdom.**

20. **The essence of the fear of the Lord lies in submitting to God and keeping His commandments. Hence Scripture frequently unites fear with obedience: "These are the commandments, that you may fear the Lord your God and keep His statutes and His commandments" (Deut. 6:1–2).**

21. Indifference and discouragement are maladies of conscience, closely related to that spiritual liberalism previously discussed. They wound the soul deeply and prevent it from rising toward the love of God and spiritual perfection.

22. When, amid the gravest and most crushing circumstances—war, famine, floods, disease, and the scourge of crimes committed by our own people—the preacher of God's word seeks to console and strengthen the faithful, he often finds no words except those of prayer to the Most Holy Virgin.

24. Such is the law for us Christians: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

25. With such love does the Most Pure Virgin love humanity. With such love she obtains for them every grace necessary for salvation; with such love she intercedes, seeking to turn away the wrath of God. When we contemplate this maternal love, we come to understand that it is truly so. Then, aided by divine grace, we shall turn to our Mother in heaven with even greater trust and a deeper conviction of her maternal goodness toward us.

26. For Christ there is no measure to mercy toward the poor, for it must imitate the mercy of God Himself: "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). Mercy knows no bounds, for "it is more blessed to give than to receive," as preserved in the apostolic tradition by Saint Paul and recorded by Saint Luke.

27. Just as in every Christian home there stands a cross and holy images, so too there should always be a devout book.

28. All Ukrainians hold learning and education in high esteem. Children eagerly attend school; parents and elders consider knowledge the first and most vital need of the nation. Perhaps centuries of hardship and subjugation awakened this instinctive understanding that nothing contributes more to renewal than knowledge. Thus education has become a national ideal. While a person's true worth lies in his value before God, that reality remains hidden from human judgment. In social estimation, intellectual strength—knowledge and wisdom—stands foremost among human qualities. Even those who lack moral integrity may possess intelligence, yet society rightly excludes those whose actions betray ethical corruption. Still, among natural human capacities, wisdom surpasses physical strength and even wealth.

29. Hope is not merely the expectation of future glory or salvation; even now it grants a share in salvation, so that the Apostle Paul could write: "In hope we were saved" (Romans 8:24). Sacred Scripture repeatedly calls blessed those who hope in God: "Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust" (Psalm 39:5); and again, "Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 145:5–6).

30. Participation in the Church's divine worship is the principal source of supernatural life. The bond that unites the soul to the Church—and through her to Christ—is manifested most clearly in active participation in the sacred services. Through them, especially in connection with the reception of the Holy Mysteries, the heart is lifted to God, the theological virtues are exercised, and personal prayer is deepened.

OCTOBER

ЖОВТЕНЬ

1. In your sacrifices there is yet something that spoils them, and against which I must warn you. It is what is called a defect within the very virtue itself. This flaw of your ardent patriotism, this defect of that virtue, is haste and imprudence. Too quickly, before you are prepared, you rush into work for the common good, into politics.

It seems to you that a soldier on the battlefield cannot stop, cannot reflect, cannot deliberate. You think that a sacrifice is the more successful the more bravely it is offered—and therefore the more recklessly. Yet how many sacrifices, offered with the noblest impulses by the best among you, become not only fruitless but actually harmful!

In life one must test the spirit; one must consider whether the spirit that impels in a given direction is a good spirit, a spirit from God. One must know how to doubt and not trust the first impression of beauty or goodness. Nature itself produces beautiful fruits, lovely in appearance, which contain within them deadly poison. There walks through the world a spirit of deception that leads astray and ruins those who do not critically

examine it. Even Satan assumes the appearance of an angel of light.

Whoever judges superficially, whoever does not penetrate to the core, to the depths of things, is easily deceived by every fiery speech, by everything that outwardly appears to be a noble impulse—though beneath those attractive external signs there may lie deceit and betrayal.

And then, misled—even if unknowingly—they may become instruments of foreign forces, and their sacrifices, offered upon the altar of love for the Fatherland, may become the object of political manipulation by anonymous and hidden actors. Their idealism may be used by others without their knowledge, and their sacrifices may even be turned against the very Fatherland to which they offer them.

For this reason every conspiracy is always so dangerous, since its inseparable companions are provocation and betrayal. It must be bound up with secrecy—even from the closest of associates—and every deception is adorned with secrecy. For the young, conspiracy is all the more dangerous because it so strongly attracts them.

2. Some regard faith as merely a feeling or trust; for others it is only adherence to tradition or the acknowledgment of some

distant force that does not intervene in human affairs. If such views were expressed plainly, they would amount to a denial of Christian revelation: a denial of the personal God, of the Most Holy Trinity, of the Incarnation, and consequently of all revealed truths. Only through ignorance can such notions remain in the soul of one who still calls himself Christian and retains even a remnant of faith and charity. Far removed from these vague ideas is that faith which, according to Christ's teaching, possesses immense spiritual power. Even a grain of such living faith can move mountains. What then will faith be when it embraces the whole of life, as it must, since "the righteous shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38)?

3. Even if faith is weak, provided it is living—for "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26)—it suffices. Faith working through love enables a person, even if little educated, to abide in Christ and Christ in him. Christ is the vine and we are the branches: "He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). For Christ to dwell in a person through grace does not require learned faith; it requires living faith manifested in love of neighbor. "He who loves his brother abides in the light" (1 John 2:10). Whoever loves fulfills the law.

4. You, the young—and this is a natural weakness of youth—sometimes go so far in sacrifice that you are ready not only to offer yourselves, but also to sacrifice what belongs to others and even common national goods. This is no longer virtue but excess, which destroys the virtue itself. The property and welfare of others are sacred, not only for Christians but for every person. The noblest goal does not justify immoral means.

5. Human nature is such that the greater the advantages with which someone is endowed, the greater the dangers to which he is exposed. Thus love for the Fatherland and sacrifice for the Fatherland carry such subtle and hidden dangers that at times it is difficult even to speak of them.

For example, it happens that a young man who has made a sacrifice for the national cause and has suffered for the Fatherland, after that suffering begins to think that he may now rest upon his laurels. Let the Fatherland now praise him; let it sustain him; he need not work any longer.

The service of love, my dear ones, knows no laurels so long as the sacrifice is not yet complete—and the sacrifice of a single moment cannot replace the labor of many years, like that of an ant. A nation advances not by the impulses of a single moment,

but by unceasing effort and continuous sacrifices—even unto blood and death—across many generations.

It is sometimes easier to shed blood in a single moment of enthusiasm than for long years faithfully to fulfill one's duties, to endure the heat of the day and the burning sun, the malice of men and the hatred of enemies, the lack of trust from one's own people, the absence of help from those closest to us—and in such labor to carry out one's task to the end, without waiting for laurels of victory or reward for one's merits.

6. In Holy Scripture the matter is presented in such a way that the first grave fall of sinful humanity—that is, the first fall after Adam's sin—is shown with such temptations to despair that one cannot even know whether the unhappy Cain resisted them. That which could have urged him toward repentance—namely, the realization of the gravity of the crime he had committed—was instead transformed in his soul into despair. A similar case is Judas, who might be called the first sinner of the New Testament, for of all those who accepted faith in Jesus Christ, he was the first to commit a grave sin and thus became, as it were, a prototype of the sins of Christians. The sin of Saint Peter, committed out of weakness and from an imprudent and insufficiently humble love for Jesus Christ, rather became the

type of those deviations or even falls of the righteous, of whom it is said that even the righteous sins many times.

7. Our purpose requires a departure from the usual presentation of Christian ethics found in moral manuals. Those works often approach morality from the standpoint of the confessor, whose task is to make repentance accessible and to demand from the penitent only the minimum required. While indispensable for confessors, this perspective can appear partial or reduced. It may even distort the grandeur of Christian righteousness if adopted as the ideal for all. For the Christian—and especially for the priest—looking at holiness through the lens of minimum obligation can obscure its true beauty and greatness.

8. Inconstancy consists, in its essence, in withdrawing from one's own good resolution. A person ordinarily abandons a resolution because of a disordered inclination toward something else. As long as the desire of the soul does not overturn the decision, a person remains firm and resists the domination of passion. But when one is unstable and changeable, the resolution is so weak that it is easily abandoned. Since a resolution is the completion of the act of practical wisdom, the

retreat from it must be attributed to the vice of imprudence (*imprudentia*). Although this vice may gain strength in the soul due to the lack of other moral virtues—such as temperance or fortitude—it nonetheless belongs to the intellect: inconstancy is fundamentally a defect of reason.

9. **The unbeliever suffers—but without hope; he is tormented—but without benefit. He seeks truth—but if he seeks it apart from God, he will not find it, for his whole life will end upon the boards of the grave.**

If he was born and did not have the happiness of being reborn of water and the Spirit as a child, yet seeks the truth as best he knows and can, and fulfills the commands of his conscience as best he knows and can—then, through Christ's mercy, perhaps he may attain eternal life.

But if one who was faithful becomes unfaithful—if the ship of faith in his life was wrecked through his own fault, through the rejection of a good conscience—his conversion is difficult, for even the righteous is scarcely saved.

And if on the path of unbelief there stands a believer who lacks a good conscience and for that very reason stands upon a road that leads into unbelief, let him awaken to the life of faith. Let him recall the word of the Apostle: "The word is near you... the

word of faith which we preach. If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart (with a living, active faith) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:8–9).

Faith slumbers in your heart—awaken it through repentance and approach the throne of mercy in holy confession. And in order to awaken faith, remind yourself what faith is—or rather, into what revealed truths faith leads the sinner for justification.

10. The Most Holy Eucharist is the continuation and completion of that Sacrifice, that self-emptying of Divine Wisdom. Christ exhausted the infinite treasures of Divine Majesty in order to continue and renew His sacrifice even after His death on the Cross. He exhausted omnipotence—nothing greater could be done; He exhausted riches—nothing more could be given; He exhausted Wisdom—nothing greater could be conceived. The eternal God becomes bread and wine for the nourishment of sinful humanity. A deeper self-abasement is inconceivable.

11. The first grave sins of humanity after the fall—Cain's sin, and later Judas's—are associated with despair. They stand as warning pillars for those tempted to walk the same path. Despair may in part be a punishment for sin, but it is also itself

a grave sin: a profound offense against divine mercy, and often the beginning of further and even graver sins. Sacred Scripture testifies that from despair people "have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). Despair destroys hope, and hope is a powerful restraint within the soul. As Solomon teaches: "If you falter in the day of distress, your strength is small" (Proverbs 24:10). The Fathers often affirm that despair is a greater sin than many others. Isidore of Pelusium writes: "To commit a grave sin is death for the soul; but to lose hope through despair is to descend into hell."

12. True wisdom, according to the Book of Wisdom (1:4), "will not enter a deceitful soul, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin." For the sinner, the higher realm of genuine wisdom is inaccessible. Although the sinful intellect may appear sharper or more technically agile—indeed, in worldly matters it may seem more cunning—this does not grant access to true wisdom.

13. The word "cunning" can be used in a positive sense, as in Proverbs: "The prudent man acts with knowledge" (13:16). More often, however, it signifies deceit, hypocrisy, or manipulation. The Fathers sometimes identify this vice with "the wisdom of the world." Gregory the Great, commenting on

Job, explains that worldly wisdom consists in concealing what is in the heart, disguising meaning with words, presenting falsehood as truth, and portraying truth as falsehood. Such cunning is opposed to authentic wisdom.

14. The virtue of good counsel is a quality of the intellect that enables it to deliberate rightly—that is, to examine all possible paths leading to a goal and to evaluate them according to how well they correspond to that end. True counsel requires attentiveness to every viable possibility; without this, it is neither complete nor correct. Yet it ceases to be a virtue if it directs toward an evil end or approves immoral means. Either error destroys its essence. Just as theoretical reasoning is flawed if it leads to a false conclusion—or even to a true conclusion from false premises—so practical reasoning is corrupted when ordered toward a false ultimate goal. Therefore, the sinner cannot possess the full virtue of good counsel, since his will is turned away from the highest good and directed toward a lesser or disordered end. Nevertheless, the movement of his intellect could resemble good counsel if it were directed toward his own conversion.

15. One of the most important characteristics of practical wisdom is carefulness—an earnest attentiveness that can even rise to holy concern. The lack of such attentiveness is the fault of negligence. Since carefulness is an essential condition of every act of practical wisdom, its absence takes on the character of sin. Negligence may also be sinful because of the matter itself—for example, carelessness in keeping a commandment or fulfilling a duty. Yet even such indifference has its root in a deficiency of practical wisdom or in a lack of diligence in carrying out its work.

A negligent person is negligent above all because he judges falsely, forms distorted notions of things, makes poor decisions, or resolves weakly—with a will that is not firmly engaged. Therefore, just as careful concern can be regarded as a distinct virtue closely united with practical wisdom—or even as a general quality of wise action—so indifference must be considered a particular sin against wisdom and counted among the forms of imprudence. It differs from imprudence in this: imprudence (rashness, lack of discernment, instability) concerns the internal act of wisdom itself, whereas indifference also touches its outward execution.

16. Faith and reason are not opposed to one another; on the contrary, they mutually assist each other. Reason establishes the foundations of faith and, enlightened by faith, develops knowledge of God's works. Faith, in turn, frees reason from error and enriches it with many truths. For this reason, the Church of Christ has never opposed the development of culture, art, or science. Rather, she fosters and powerfully contributes to their growth.

The Church neither despises nor denies the genuine goods of culture that serve the human person. She recognizes that all such goods proceed from "God, the Lord of all knowledge" (1 Samuel 2:3) and, with the help of His grace, can lead back to Him when rightly used. She does not forbid the sciences to employ their own principles and methods within their proper sphere. She affirms the legitimate freedom of scholarship, warning only that so-called "science" must not present falsehood as truth in contradiction to divine revelation, nor overstep its boundaries by intruding into matters that belong to faith.

17. Saint Basil the Great—or rather the author of the Commentary on Isaiah (MSG XXX, 410)—says the following:

"Virtue is a mean and a symmetry. Intemperance, on both sides, is a lack of measure—manifesting either excess in virtue or deficiency—and is disorder and shapelessness. Thus courage is the mean; excess is rashness born of imbalance, and defect is cowardice, which arises from sin."

And Saint Gregory of Nyssa (MSG XLIV, 971) says:

"Virtue is the mean between two vices, namely between the lack of good and its excess."

Saint Jerome (MSL XXII, 898) says likewise:

"It is difficult in all things to preserve measure; and according to the philosophers, virtue is measure, while excess is vice."

This measure in all moral virtues is determined by reason. It is not a matter of quantitative measure, but of a rational rule that prescribes what must be done according to the needs of persons, circumstances, and time. This measure of rational rule—of a reasonable and comprehensive evaluation of a situation—is the proper standard in virtue. For in justice one is concerned with rights and duties. To render to each what is due to him means to adapt one's duty of justice to the measure of his rights.

It is understood that the theological virtues—faith, hope, and charity—cannot consist in measure. One cannot believe in God excessively, hope in Him excessively, or love Him excessively. Yet even here there is a natural aspect upon which these virtues rest—one might say a moral aspect in relation to other people.

Thus it can be said that one must believe people in due measure and according to the dictates of reason—that is, to believe according to their trustworthiness, and to avoid both credulity and distrust. The same is observed in natural love: without preserving reasonable measure, one may either go to excess or fall short in what is given to the beloved. Thus a mother may, by excessive love, spoil her child.

18. There are also situations in which general rules of conduct cannot be applied—where natural, healthy, what one might call plain common sense tells a person that applying a general principle to a particular case will have harmful consequences and will not lead to the intended goal.

There are cases in which a general principle that is ordinarily applied in similar circumstances cannot be applied. Its application would result either in injustice to someone or in something that would offend every human sense of fairness or understanding. In such cases, one must apply not the usual and

general norms of conduct, not ordinary rules, but some more general and higher principle—perhaps less well known—which directs that the matter be judged differently.

It must be noted that in such extraordinary cases the extraordinary manner of acting is dictated not by feeling, not by love, but by reason, which perceives in the exceptional case something that general principles do not sufficiently take into account. In that case there are rational grounds that require a departure from the general manner of acting.

For a general norm—even when it is a law, and still more when it is only a moral principle—is constructed by the human intellect and serves the greater number of cases in accordance with a general pattern. But it cannot serve to resolve all cases, since reason cannot even come to know all possible cases.

Therefore, when confronted with an unusual or exceptional case, reason must rely on what might be called intuition, and what moralists call equity (*gnome*). It is sound reason that sees beyond the general principle the necessity, in a particular case, of acting in such a way as to reconcile rights and duties, to harm no one, and somehow to attain the goal.

19. Practical wisdom, according to Saint Augustine, is "the knowledge of things that are to be desired and things that are to be avoided." The same meaning is conveyed in the definition of wisdom as the "right rule of action" (*recta ratio agibilium*). In both expressions, wisdom is presented as a kind of forward-looking vision into the future. By such a view of what lies ahead, we determine what we ought to do and what we ought not to do.

But how does wisdom look into the future? Certainly not by some natural spirit, nor by intuitive foreknowledge of what is to come, nor by divination. Wisdom judges the future on the basis of past and present events. It draws conclusions from one in relation to the other and forms, as it were, probable calculations. This is necessary in order to discern the path by which one must advance toward the goal.

20. Part of the Church's formative power lies in the gathering of all—on Sundays and feast days—into the temple of God, just as children gather in the house of their father. The rich and the poor, the learned and the simple, the old and the young are brought together under the wise guidance of the Church. She reminds all of their mutual duties and proclaims to all the law

of love. Approaching together the Most Holy Eucharist, Christians learn to regard one another as brothers and to remember that dignity is not measured by costly clothing, but by worthiness in the sight of the Most High God.

21. It is the sacred duty of a Christian to love those who are closer to him—his own family—more than strangers. Therefore, love for one's family and homeland should be deeper and more ardent.

Yet this nearer and warmer love must not contradict the broader and more universal love. Both flow from the same source—God.

22. All people in this world form one family. Human beings resemble one another in both the good and the frailties of human nature, so that in every person we see something of ourselves. To refuse to love human nature would be to become enemies to ourselves, since we share in that same nature.

23. As an expression of love for neighbor, almsgiving must follow a natural order: one should first help those in greater need, those nearer to oneself rather than strangers, and the upright rather than the wicked. Yet almsgiving must also be given wisely—truly to the needy and not in a way that encourages vice, such as laziness or drunkenness. The form of

charity that best fulfills this condition is that which uplifts and reforms—especially charity that provides the opportunity to earn one's livelihood.

24. **A comparison: Light in your home, brother, two lights—a small candle and a large oil lamp.**

One will not extinguish the other; both will shine. Only one will be brighter, the other dimmer.

So it is in your heart. Let every light of love burn there—those rays that flow from God into your soul and that arise from the love by which you must love Him above all. First, because He has loved you immeasurably. Then, because He is your highest Good. And finally, because as the most perfect Being He is worthy of your love.

25. **For the work of practical wisdom, there is required that quality of the human intellect called teachableness or docility (*docilitas*). By these terms we mean that disposition of mind by which a person readily accepts instruction and counsel from others, proves a good student, and quickly grasps a discipline or an idea.**

This quality is necessary for the moral virtue of wisdom because its subject matter consists in particular cases, in which one must

act rightly according to reason. Such individual cases are innumerable—indeed, in a strict sense, the differences between particular situations may be practically endless. From this it follows that even a capable person cannot foresee and examine every case—not only in a short time, but even over many years.

Therefore, in matters of practical wisdom, each person necessarily requires the assistance of others and must rely on the experience of others. Above all, the experience of those who, through long practice, have acquired the knowledge and skill that accompany prudent conduct is especially valuable. For everyone, the experience of the seasoned and the elderly is of particular worth.

26. The sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick reminds us of our perhaps not-so-distant death. For this reason, the remembrance of that final repentance required for the worthy reception of the Sacraments becomes a fruitful meditation for a person who wishes to free himself from the danger of sin, and especially for a pastor who desires to shake and convert the souls of sinners.

It is not our task here to provide such meditations, leaving that subject, of course, to appropriate books or to the intuition of the preacher. We will only say that remembrance of death is a

very necessary—almost indispensable—element of Christian life. For a Christian, in order to form a correct judgment about the Christian life, about his own shortcomings, and about repentance, must repeatedly look at his present and future life from that standpoint where the present life is already ending and, in a moment, the life to come—the life beyond the grave—is about to begin.

Clearly, all the affairs of life appear entirely different when seen from that point of observation than from other perspectives; yet this observation is the most certain and the closest to the truth. In the light of this perspective, time diminishes almost to the size of a seed, while there grows in significance that reckoning of ages of life which the Latins call *aevum*.

In a word, what awaits us beyond the grave—those eternal ages of life or death, of joy or sorrow—which are so difficult for us to contemplate through the haze of the present life that so often gives a false perspective—appear more clearly when, standing before that wall which separates us from eternity, we ask ourselves: what comes next?

27. The Most Pure Virgin Mary loves us with the love of a true mother, for in us she sees the work of her own Son, Jesus Christ. The work of our salvation and sanctification is likewise the work of Christ the Savior within us—who does not know this?

28. In our rite, that honor above all honors—the veneration by which we exalt the Mother of God above every possible dignity of created beings, beneath only the one God in Trinity—is expressed eloquently in many liturgical practices and institutions.

Above all, in the liturgical year, which sets before the eyes of Christians the life and teaching of the Savior, the veneration of the Mother of God is so intimately united with the veneration of Christ that it appears almost inseparable from Him.

29. Christ regards hope placed not in God as nothing less than service to mammon (Matt. 6:24), and He warns against storing up for oneself treasures on earth, "where moth and rust destroy" (Matt. 6:19). In this lies a most beautiful image of hope: "Treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy... For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:20–21).

30. Christ said: "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek" (Matt. 6:31).

A person rightly asks whether such concern and diligence in securing daily bread can be sinful, and if so, in what way.

Concern for bread urges one to strive to obtain it. Where there is greater fear of lacking it, there is greater anxiety about securing it. Conversely, where there is certainty and security in obtaining daily bread, there is less worry and less distress.

For three reasons, concern for daily bread can become sinful.

First, when a person so busies himself with the necessities of life that they become for him the highest goal of existence.

Second, diligence and anxiety about temporal goods may be excessive. They are excessive when they draw a person away from spiritual goods, which are first and of greater importance. Thus, in the parable of the sower—or rather in Christ's own explanation of it—the Gospel says: "The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful" (Matt. 13:22).

Third, such worry is forbidden when it arises from a lack of trust in the Lord God and in His holy providence. This lack of

trust gives rise to unnecessary and excessive fear—that even after a person has done what he can and ought to do, he will still fail to attain what is necessary for his needs.

31. Great and almighty God! Send down upon me from Your high and holy heavens, from the throne of Your glory, Your holy wisdom that belongs to You. Grant me the wisdom of Your good pleasure, that in life I may ardently desire what is pleasing to You, wisely seek it, truly know it, and perfectly accomplish it for the glory and honor of Your holy Name, "to the praise of the glory of Your grace" (Eph. 1:6).

Grant me, O God, the wisdom proper to my state of life, that I may do all that You desire; grant me to understand my duties; grant me the wisdom of my duties and the grace to fulfill them as I ought, for Your glory and the good of my soul.

Grant me the wisdom of Your ways and the wisdom of walking in the paths of Your holy will; grant me the wisdom of success and of failure, that I may not be carried away by the one nor cast down by the other; grant me the wisdom of joy and the wisdom of sorrow—that I may rejoice only in what leads to You and grieve only over what separates me from You.

Grant me the wisdom concerning all that passes away and all that endures; let the former diminish in my eyes and the latter

increase. Grant me the wisdom of work and the wisdom of rest; let work for You be my delight, and rest without You my weariness.

Grant me the wisdom of sincere and simple intention, the wisdom of simplicity and sincerity; let my heart turn to You and seek You in all things.

Grant me the wisdom of obedience—obedience to Your law and to Your Church. Grant me the wisdom of poverty—that I may never value goods except according to their true worth. Grant me the wisdom of chastity according to my state or vocation; the wisdom of patience and humility; the wisdom of cheerfulness and gravity; the wisdom of the fear of the Lord; the wisdom of truthfulness and good works.

May I be patient without complaint; humble without pretense; joyful without excess; serious without harshness; fearing You without falling into despair; truthful without duplicity. May my good works be free from self-complacency. Grant me the wisdom to build up by word and deed without hypocrisy.

Grant me, O God, the wisdom of vigilance, attention, and prudence; let no vain thought lead me astray. Grant me the wisdom of nobility, that no base inclination may ever overcome me. Grant me the wisdom of integrity, that no selfish motive

may divert me from duty. Grant me the wisdom of freedom, that no violent passion may enslave me.

Grant me the wisdom of the theological and moral virtues: faith, hope, charity, prudence, piety, temperance, and fortitude. Grant me, O God, the wisdom of the Apostles and the wisdom of the martyrs. Grant me priestly and pastoral wisdom; grant me the wisdom of preachers and teachers; the wisdom of ministers of the holy Mysteries; Eucharistic wisdom and mystical wisdom—the wisdom of prayer and contemplation.

Above all, Lord, grant me the wisdom of heartfelt repentance and of both imperfect and perfect contrition; grant me the wisdom of sacrifice, the wisdom of the Cross, the wisdom of the Blood.

Finally, O God, grant me that wisdom which, according to Your holy designs, leads to the union of the Churches under one supreme shepherd—the Roman Pontiff. Grant me the wisdom to value, love, and dedicate my life to this holy work of unity. Grant me the wisdom of our Eastern rite—its faithful observance, renewal, and progress. Grant me the wisdom of the holy Fathers of the Eastern Church and of all the great Doctors of the Church. Grant me the wisdom of Your great Apostle

Paul, that I may rightly understand his epistles, remember them, and explain them to Your people.

Grant me the wisdom of Your first Vicar, that I may understand the designs of Your divine providence, which governs the Church through the Roman Pontiffs. Grant me the wisdom of obedience to them and to the universal Catholic Church. Grant me the wisdom of Church history and theology. Grant me this wisdom which both I and our people most lack. Grant me the wisdom of true contentment and true happiness.

Amen.

NOVEMBER

ЛИСТОПАД

1. At the depth of your soul, faith may still be slumbering; it seems almost dead. For faith without works is dead. Yet almost a single word is enough to awaken it again to life—but you yourself must speak that word.

2. The human heart is by nature sensitive to suffering; it even feels and sympathizes with the suffering of animals. How much greater, then, must natural compassion be toward the sufferings and misfortunes of human beings! One may confidently say that this feeling is among the most essential traits of human nature; whoever lacks such compassion at the sight of a neighbor's suffering has, in a sense, renounced his humanity. For this reason, mercy is, as it were, the gateway to Christian love of neighbor.

3. Human beings are by their very nature so bound together that they cannot exist without the society of others. The life of each person is so intertwined with the lives of others that it cannot sustain itself alone.

Comparison: As a plant draws life from its roots and from the soil, so a person lives within humanity: he lives only so long as he remains attached to his root—society. And as a plant, once torn from its roots, withers, so too a person perishes when cut off from others. The force that binds and unites people with one another is precisely that natural, often unconscious love.

4. Universal love among people would not be rare if they were not divided by exaggerated and misunderstood self-love. When people regard as their own good something that actually opposes the good of others, quarrels, hatred, and wars arise. These evils become more widespread the less there is among people a common awareness of what is truly the one good for all.

5. Human beings are sinners. They are blinded by passions; self-love prevents them from recognizing the divine truth of the holy Gospel. Despite all that Christ has done for them, they so often abandon God's ways and follow their own, to the ruin of soul and body.

To save them and lead them back to the true path, Christ gave us yet another gift—a gift above all gifts. After His holy Ascension, ten days later, He sent us His Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God, given to us, lives within us and leads everyone who is

willing to submit to His holy guidance along the paths of Christian life.

You, my dear ones, have received that gift—a great, radiant, holy gift that dwells in each soul, receives us, guides us, and hears our prayer. What an infinite good this is, what a wondrous heavenly gift, what happiness it is to be a Christian!

6. Another cause of our weakness in the supernatural life is the inevitable struggle of reason with the passions. When reason resigns from this struggle and yields to the passions, it may serve them in ways it would not if it had to fight them. This inner struggle consumes much of intellectual life, and naturally passion often darkens the reason that strives toward a higher end.

In a soul enslaved by sin, the passions may sometimes sharpen the edge of the intellect, yet they also obscure it at the moment when that intellect, breaking free from bondage, seeks higher and true wisdom.

7. Among those vices that imitate or counterfeit practical wisdom, the first is what the Apostle Paul calls "the wisdom of the flesh." In imitation of true prudence, sinners may choose the

most fitting means to attain a goal that consists in some bodily good.

Since it belongs to true practical wisdom to seek and find suitable means for attaining a true end, this quality in sinners resembles prudence and imitates it. But to make one's highest end out of any bodily good—or any good that is not God—is sin. Therefore, the "wisdom" of sinners is itself sinful and leads to sin. For this reason the holy Apostle Paul says that the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God.

8. The root of the vices opposed to wisdom is greed or avarice—that is, an unrestrained craving for the goods of this world. From it arise, first of all, those vices that imitate or counterfeit wisdom. In all of them the intellect itself is not weakened. Its use, its natural health and strength, remain fully intact—but they are directed toward some false supreme end.

Thus, greed for worldly goods by its very nature gives rise to those vices that set such goods as their goal. The more false or apparent the good to which reason is made to serve, the greater and more dangerous the vice.

The "wisdom of the flesh" may set as its goal the possession of external goods, and then it is almost identical with greed for such goods and flows directly from it. From greed likewise

proceeds—or toward greed leads, and in any case is closely connected with it—the wisdom of the flesh when it makes sensual pleasure or pride its highest aim: the lust of the flesh or the pride of life. In both sensual indulgence and pride of life, possession of worldly goods—of which money is the clearest symbol—is necessary, for only the wealthy can live as they please, and wealth is the most direct means to bodily pleasures and the glory sought by pride.

9. In many people imprudence takes the form of rashness: wishing to reach the goal as quickly as possible, a person hurls himself forward headlong, skipping over the necessary conditions of reasonable action. He decides immediately, without considering all possible solutions, without consulting either himself or others, without weighing circumstances or difficulties.

A classic example of such rashness is found in Sacred Scripture. When the scouts returned from the Promised Land to the camp of Israel and reported on their journey, the people, without carefully examining all the facts, lost heart, fell into despair, and began to complain against Moses and against the Lord. In doing so, they exposed themselves to divine punishment. Moses prayed for the people. God indeed forgave them, yet He punished their

imprudence, ingratitude, and blasphemous murmuring by decreeing that that entire generation would not enter the Holy Land. The scouts, whose exaggerated report caused the people's sin, were condemned to death.

The people, leaping from one extreme to another, humbled themselves and acknowledged their fault. Yet with equal rashness they undertook a military expedition. Though Moses tried to restrain them from their reckless decision to attack the Amorites and Canaanites without preparation, they would not listen and suffered total defeat.

In such unconsidered and impulsive conduct other faults of the soul are clearly at work. A person does not act this way without disordered passion. Even if the will sometimes appears frivolous, rushing forward as if blindfolded, uncontrolled passion always plays its role. Moreover, contempt for the counsel and authority of others—as in this case the authority of Moses—is a sign of pride. A person places his own opinion above all others and trusts it without regard for circumstances or danger. What seemed right in the first moment is accepted as sound currency, and the matter is decided though not yet ripe for decision. As Solomon rightly said: "The way of the wicked is shrouded in darkness; they do not know where they stumble" (Prov. 4:19).

10. Faith leads the sinner to the awareness that he truly is a sinner—that he needs justification before God and Christ's salvation. In the soul of a sinner, faith is dead and inactive; yet it remains a light that shines into the darkness of sin.

A believing sinner can make use of that light to lift the eye of his soul toward heaven, to God our Father, who does not will the death of the sinner but desires his conversion. With the eye of faith he can look upon the path by which Divine mercy calls him to repentance. He can look into the darkness that is sin—the death of the soul—from which there can so easily arise that second and more terrible death: the hopeless death of eternal perdition.

With the eye of his soul, the sinner can gaze into that "outer darkness," as Holy Scripture calls it—the darkness of eternal condemnation—for he believes that every mortal sin deserves eternal judgment. In thought, through faith, he can descend into hell while still alive, and in this life contemplate what awaits him after death. He can look upon the dim fire that burns, hear the gnashing of teeth, and feel the trembling of dread and fear

11. In another light, all the values of this earth and of this life appear changed. This reevaluation of everything is such that what seemed most precious yesterday becomes worthless today, while a small and seemingly insignificant suffering—once avoided—now shines with the light of eternal blessedness.

The very notions of duty, merit, God's law, sin, responsibility before God, and many others are transformed. The contemplation of death casts its light upon every concept of Christian and human life. And what in eternity has true significance—namely, the reward of the Kingdom of God, treasures in heaven, the crown of victory—what remains hidden from our eyes, death partially unveils, allowing us at least to glimpse what it may be, what it shall be.

In such moments of reflection, the will can rise to decisions for which it previously lacked strength, or which it had altogether forgotten. After such meditation, we seek reconciliation with those who have offended us or whom we have wronged; we repay forgotten debts; we strive to fulfill neglected duties—in a word, we restore order where perhaps for many years there was none.

To gather the fruits of meditating on death into a brief counsel, I invite those who may one day read these remarks to undertake the following short reflection, for which abundant material may be found without the aid of any book. With a clock in hand, let me say to myself: when that hand reaches that mark, I shall die and stand before God's judgment.

This reflection may take many forms. I shall likely pray and think differently if I place myself fifteen minutes before death than if I place myself only three minutes before death. Such meditation will perhaps show, above all, how even three minutes are an immense gift of God—since, according to divine revelation, in that time one may merit an infinite reward in heaven.

The question is simply this: what can I do in those three minutes, or in that quarter hour? By what means can I most effectively obtain God's grace, best prepare myself, most worthily merit? There is no doubt that the merit of an entire life of a righteous Christian may be less than the merit of the good Christian acts that a Saint can perform in three minutes. It sometimes seems that one of us sinners, having repented, would be infinitely blessed after death if the merit of our whole life—of repentance, merits, and sacrifices—were equal to the

merit of three minutes of the life of the Most Pure Virgin Mary in the moment before she became the Mother of God

12. **A lack of theological knowledge often results in an erroneous conscience, even in seemingly minor matters. If a person is inclined toward excessive liberty or struggles with strong passions without serious resistance, ignorance of theology may produce a morally lax conscience.**

In pastoral life, an additional difficulty arises when many of the faithful approach confession only once a year. Near Pascha, crowds gather for confession, and the priest—confessing for many hours daily—may be tempted to perform his duty in a hurried or superficial manner, thereby harming both penitents and himself.

13. **When heresies spread, even those distant from heretics may absorb elements of error if they do not understand the faith sufficiently. In modern times, certain movements reduced faith to mere religious sentiment rather than intellectual assent to revealed truth.**

For Catholics, faith is not mere feeling but a supernatural knowledge of truth. It is an act of the intellect enlightened by

God's grace. Though faith does not grasp truth by internal demonstration but accepts it on the authority of God, this does not diminish its rational character. Faith may be said to transcend reason, but it never contradicts it. It is certain knowledge grounded in the strongest possible motive: divine authority. It is not a collection of probabilities nor a private experience, but firm conviction in revealed truth. To believe is a rational and obligatory act; not to believe is a sin against God and truth.

14. The most common form of deception is deception through words, since words are the primary means by which one communicates. Yet deception may also reside in the heart. Scripture speaks of those who "meditate deceit all the day long" (Ps. 37:13) and of souls "full of deceit" (Sir. 19:23).

15. Something may be good today but harmful tomorrow. From a distance it may appear good, yet upon closer inspection prove harmful.

16. A thing good in small measure may become harmful in excess. Fire warms and cooks when contained—but in wildfire it destroys. Water refreshes and cleanses—but in flood it devastates fields and cities.

17. It is unjust to call "love" that sentiment by which a person seeks only his own benefit in another—demanding that the neighbor serve merely his own advantage. Such self-seeking is not true love.

18. Counsel is unnecessary in only two situations. First, when there is only one possible path and only one way to reach it. No one deliberates about passing from one room to another if there is but a single door. Likewise, no one seeks counsel in matters where there is no doubt—for example, in solving a mathematical problem, unless one is learning how to do so; but that is instruction, not deliberation properly speaking.

Second, counsel is unnecessary when it makes no difference how something is done—when the matter is insignificant. In the example of the single door, one might step through with the right foot or the left; such a detail requires no deliberation. As St. Gregory of Nyssa observes, there is no need of counsel in matters governed by precise knowledge or established skill.

19. A person may fear either punishment or guilt. If he fears punishment, he does so out of self-love, since punishment is the loss of some good that belongs to him. Such fear of punishment can arise from a kind of love that is opposed to the love of God;

and therefore such fear likewise stands opposed to divine love—namely, when a man fears punishment in such a way that the fear does not lessen in him the will to sin, and he remains reconciled to that will. This servile fear is simply evil; it is no virtue and in no way leads to God.

Yet a person may love himself in such a way that this love does not oppose the love of God, because he does not set his own good as his highest end. He subjects self-love to the order of reason and likewise to the order of faith. Such love, and the fear connected with it and arising from it, may exist in the soul by God's grace.

Even within this fear, however, a person may rise higher, insofar as he learns to love himself in God and for God. Such self-love is truly a love of God; and the fear that flows from it is called filial fear. It coincides with that fear which is not fear of punishment but fear of guilt. For he who fears not punishment but guilt loves God more than himself. In guilt he sees that which deprives him of God, that which separates him from God.

Therefore it is called filial fear, for it is the mark of children to fear offending their Father.

20. First place among the acts belongs to contrition. It is "sorrow of the soul and detestation of the sin committed, together with the firm purpose of not sinning again." Thus the Council of Trent defines contrition and adds:

"This movement of contrition was at all times necessary for obtaining the forgiveness of sins; and in a person who has fallen after Baptism, it prepares the soul for the remission of sins, provided that, with faith in God's mercy and the will to fulfill all else required for the lawful reception of this holy Sacrament, he arouses such contrition within himself."

The holy Council of Trent clearly teaches that contrition does not consist merely in ceasing from sin, nor only in resolving to begin a new life and actually beginning it. In contrition there must be hatred of one's former life, according to the words of the Prophet: "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have offended God, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit..." (Ezek. 18:31).

The same meaning is found in the prayers and expressions of the saints: "Against You alone have I sinned; before You have I done evil" (Ps. 50[51]:6). Or: "I am weary with my groaning; every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears"

(Ps. 6:7). Or: "I will recount before You all the years of my life in the bitterness of my soul" (Is. 38:15/20).

Whoever reflects upon these and many similar passages of Holy Scripture will easily understand that such words arise from a deep hatred of one's former life and from a profound loathing of sin

21. To understand the ruin of spiritual life—namely, the loss of divine grace—one must consider what theology calls "dead faith." St. James describes faith as dead when it is not accompanied by works. Theology likewise calls dead that faith which is not united with grace, which does not "work through love" (Gal. 5:6).

Even such faith is a gift of God, for no one by natural powers alone can assent to the truths of the Gospel, which surpass human understanding. This truth was firmly taught by the Church against the Pelagian heresy. Though called "dead," such faith remains a great gift, for it opens heaven to man and unites the intellect to divine truth.

22. Christianity is fundamentally a call to glory. The Apostle exhorted believers "to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12). Christian life is sown

in weakness but raised in power; sown in dishonor but raised in glory (cf. 1 Cor. 15:43–44). The Psalms proclaim the blessedness of those chosen to dwell in God's house (Ps. 64:5). The Book of Revelation overflows with images of the eternal glory awaiting the righteous.

23. In both private and public life, Christians remain entirely free. They may fulfill the obligations of their faith—or neglect them—and the Church is more tolerant than any other society in the world. She deprives no one of communion unless a person separates himself; she does not punish even those who, against their own convictions, fail to carry out their duties.

This freedom and tolerance can make the structure of the Church appear loose or weak. Christians who do not sufficiently understand the social significance of their faith may seem only loosely united among themselves and with those who profess the same principles. At first glance, Christianity may not appear to be a solid and united social body composed of people firmly convinced and consistent in their principles.

24. Hope is the movement of the soul that arises when one perceives—through sense or imagination—a future good that is difficult to obtain yet still attainable. Its object must be a good, for one does not hope for what one neither loves nor desires.

Hope differs from love and desire, however. We cannot hope for a good already possessed, nor can we desire what is impossible to attain. Thus, the object of hope must be a future good—not yet achieved—and one accompanied by difficulty. No one hopes for what can be obtained with absolute certainty and without effort, as with the rising of the sun. Finally, the good hoped for must be attainable; if it is impossible, hope gives way to despair.

25. Indifference toward what seems insignificant in rites can lead to serious error. In the administration of the Sacraments, validity may depend upon a single word. One who considers it a small matter to recite prayers hastily—so that certain words are omitted—may not notice when he grows accustomed to pronouncing absolution in such a way that it becomes invalid through the unclear utterance of an essential word.

In prayer, only those words pronounced clearly, consciously, and with the heart truly carry weight before God.

26. Most likely, all the Saints who labored for the salvation of souls—and perhaps even more those who prayed for it—had their own distinct "school" of prayer. In the lives of the Saints one finds many powerful heroes of faith, each with his own path of prayer, which he handed down to disciples.

How marvelous the diversity of these schools—a rich garden with countless flowers: the white lily reaching upward to heaven, the fragrant violet hidden in the grass, the deep red rose, and innumerable others. So too are the many spiritual traditions of prayer transmitted through the wisdom-filled writings of the Saints.

27. The necessity of divine gifts is evident from the fact that even a person sanctified by grace and enlightened by faith must overcome many difficulties in order to live and persevere as a Christian. The gift of counsel—bestowed with grace upon all Christians—assists in navigating these challenges.

28. In prayer we must entrust to the Most Pure Mother of God our entire people and our whole homeland. We must ask her to obtain for all our brothers and for ourselves the grace of true and sincere love of country. As a loving Mother, she understands our sufferings and needs and will obtain for us guidance and help in all pressing matters.

29. The Apostles are, in the fullest sense, our fathers in faith. Through their hands God bestowed upon humanity—and upon every nation within the Church—the entirety of apostolic tradition. In our spiritual life and in our preaching, we must never forget that all we have has come to us through them.

30. The tomb of a martyr is truly a great treasure. The faithful are easily moved to seek consolation and help there in all their troubles and sorrows. Each martyr's tomb is a source of miraculous grace, drawn forth according to the measure of one's faith. Whoever approaches a martyr with great faith may, through his intercession, expect all things from God.

DECEMBER

ГРУДЕНЬ

1. Let us add that by nature we are sensitive to what others feel. Human hearts are so closely bound together that every movement of one sets the others in motion; it echoes from heart to heart like the sound of bells carried upon the waves of the air.

2. Love of neighbor—more precisely, love of God that embraces all neighbors as children of God or at least as those called to become His children—raises a person above all creation and the entire material world. It teaches him, following the example of Jesus Christ, to give even his life for the salvation and life of others. The summit of this love reaches heaven, yet its foundation rests firmly in human nature. There is no person who has never felt, in the natural inclination of the human heart toward compassion and mercy, the need for love.

3. The mysterious words of prophecy, even if only in a small measure, unveil the mystery of the glory of God's children—"what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). Though this mystery is hidden like a treasure, it is certain that this treasure is a secured good, for

which one may undertake even the greatest labor. As the Apostle says: "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

4. Keep the law of God—guard yourselves against sin. Sin is death for the soul, for it deprives it of God's grace, which is life and salvation and the highest, the only true good of the soul.

After sin comes the punishment of an angered and just God. And the wrath of God, the loss of His favor, is dreadful. It is a fearful thing, beloved brethren, to fall into the hands of the angry and just God. It is dreadful to be cast into the fire of hell; dreadful to be deprived of the happiness of the blessed in heaven.

Before such a terrible punishment the blood grows cold in one's veins and the heart tightens with fear. A sinner exposes himself to such dreadful punishment through a single mortal sin. Mortal sin may be an act, a thought, or a word which before men seems no fault at all.

For one sinful thought the heavenly angels were punished and became eternally accursed devils; for one sin of our first parents the entire human race was punished. A single sin suffices to

close the gates of heaven to a man and to open before his feet the gates of hell.

Whoever among you has sinned—let him weep, let him do penance; let him, by love for his infinitely good Father in heaven, wipe from his soul the stain of sin; let him loathe sin and turn away from it; let him make reparation and beg the all-merciful Father to forgive his sin and receive him again into His grace, as the good father received the prodigal son.

Rise from sin, amend your life, and strive at every moment to love above all else the God who has loved you so greatly that He sent His Son from heaven to you for your salvation; who loves you so deeply that He desires and wills your salvation, who wishes, as a Father, to embrace you as His children and to receive you into His eternal kingdom, there to dwell with Him as His beloved sons and daughters

5. If a Christian completely neglects his soul and God's law, then he prefers pleasing himself rather than observing the divine order—even though he knows that terrible punishment follows sin.

An example will help make this clear. Consider a farmer in the spring who goes out to his work. He realizes that it is time to plow and sow; he understands that this is good and necessary.

Yet the labor is hard. It would be easier—and perhaps more pleasant—to go into town to the market, or even to the tavern and indulge in drink, though he knows that by doing so he would bring upon himself God's punishment.

Thus he has free will: either to work honestly and fulfill his duty toward his wife and children, or to gratify his body through drunkenness and immorality.

If he is a conscientious man, he will love his duty and his labor more than drunkenness, and he will at once drive away any thought that tempts him to indulge his passions.

But a frivolous man, who cares nothing for his soul or for God, will prefer the tavern to honest, Christian work performed in good conscience.

As we see, both are free; each can do as he wishes. Yet one chooses the fulfillment of his duties—chooses the good of the soul according to God—while the other chooses self-indulgence, the empty and fleeting good of the body

6. When St. Paul or St. James speaks of the "wisdom of the flesh," they mean a turning toward bodily goods that in fact becomes a turning away from God. For this reason St. Paul plainly calls it enmity against God (Rom. 8:7), and St. James

speaks of a wisdom that does not descend from above but is "earthly, sensual, demonic" (Jas. 3:15).

7. Wealth, health, and strength are goods—if they are used properly. But when they are used to offend God and thus bring about one's eternal ruin, they no longer serve as goods but become a dreadful misfortune.

So it is in all things. There is no good in this world that can absolutely and completely satisfy every human desire.

Therefore, man constantly exercises free will: he lives as he chooses, according to his preference. God imposes no coercion. Even when He gives His holy Law, He leaves man free—free to follow the path shown by that Law or to depart from it and sin. A person may fix the eyes of his mind upon divine truth and will what God wills, or he may look only to what pleases the body and desire that alone.

Each day and in every action, a person chooses what he prefers. If he is conscientious and fears God, he will prefer God's law and strive to fulfill it—even with difficulty and sacrifice—rather than indulge in drunkenness, theft, or immorality, though such things may gratify the body.

8. Christian moralists perhaps speak too seldom about the particular virtue of simplicity and sincerity. It is not easy to classify it among the virtues. At times it is unclear in what it precisely consists or to which theological or moral virtue it belongs. It seems more accurate to say that it is a quality without which no virtue is truly virtue.

Its absence—hypocrisy—is so fundamentally opposed to the Gospel that where it is fully present, it destroys the spiritual life altogether.

Various virtues are so united that they effectively form one virtue, best described as evangelical simplicity. The Christian ideal is to be like children, without duplicity, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God (Lk. 18:16).

9. For a sinner who has fallen after Baptism, faith is dead; it lies as if at the bottom of the soul, inactive. He is not accustomed to valuing or using it and therefore remains in danger of despair. The more clearly he sees the misfortune of divine punishment and the more he fears it, the greater the danger that he will fail to rise in hope and contemplate God's mercy. If divine grace were to abandon him on the path of justification—or if he himself were to turn away from grace—he would inevitably fall into the abyss of despair.

10. The wisdom of the flesh is a grave sin insofar as it sets bodily good as the highest end, thereby turning a person away from the true highest end—God. It is impossible for the will to aim at two independent supreme ends. There cannot be two ultimate goals of human action; if one is subordinated to another, then only one is ultimate and the other intermediate.

If bodily good is sought as a secondary end and properly subordinated to the good of the soul and to God, there is no sin in such concern, and moral theologians do not call this the "wisdom of the flesh." But one may seek bodily pleasure or comfort in a way that is not fully subordinated to God, though not directly opposed to Him. In such a case, the pursuit of such satisfaction is not a mortal sin but a venial one, and this kind of "wisdom of the flesh" does not constitute a deadly sin.

11. In the harsh years of world war, when sufferings multiply, the eyes of Christians more frequently turn to the Most Pure Virgin Mary. From her they expect counsel and help, entrusting to her the care of the afflicted and the cause of world peace—a cause in which human beings see no solution.

12. A striking example of cunning conduct is told in the Book of Joshua. When Israel was conquering the Promised Land and the Canaanite peoples, foreseeing their destruction, prepared for desperate resistance, delegates from the nearby city of Gibeon and three neighboring towns came to Joshua. They were dressed in worn garments, with tattered sandals, carrying old sacks and dry bread, as though they had traveled for weeks.

Standing before Joshua and the elders of Israel, they proposed an alliance, claiming to come from a distant land. By their appearance and provisions they sought to create the impression of a long journey (Josh. 9:3–14). Israel, in its simplicity, accepted their story at face value.

13. The vice of rashness differs essentially from the virtue of *eustochia*—that keen readiness of judgment which quickly and accurately grasps what is fitting.

The virtue appears only when prompt decision is truly required—not when haste is unnecessary or when time permits deliberation. True promptness does not despise counsel nor ignore circumstances and dangers. Rather, whether as a natural

gift or a grace, it considers all this swiftly, often more under the influence of the gift of counsel than of one's own reasoning.

The soul, illumined by grace, relies not on itself but on God, placing divine help first. Seeing the need for rapid action, it fulfills its duty without delay, yet with humility that secures aid from heaven.

Such readiness resembles a moment of inspired genius; rashness, by contrast, resembles the act of a foolish man wishing to appear a genius.

14. **This weakness arises largely because many Christians are Christians in name only. Many lack Christian principles altogether; others possess them but fail to live by them—both in private and in public life.**

Wherever even a few genuine Christians are found—those who actually fulfill the duties they profess—there must arise, under the guidance of the Church, a strong and united organization and social action grounded in God's law and in the spirit of Christian charity.

15. Through sin the bond of love between the Lord and man is broken; the golden ring of love is lost. But when one returns to God through confession, that ring is restored.

If any among you have resembled the prodigal son in sin, resemble him also in repentance. God will receive you as the merciful father received his son.

And just as that son, once welcomed home with such love, no longer left his father's house nor returned to servitude, so you who have returned to God through repentance must not return to your former sins.

Would that prodigal, after such mercy, have listened again to the master who once set him to feed swine? Even had he promised former pleasures, would he have followed? Surely he would not have listened.

16. Filial fear grows as love increases and remains even in the saints in heaven. Servile fear, insofar as it is servile, vanishes as love enters the soul.

Theologians teach that as love approaches, the servility of fear fades, though the fear of punishment may remain—but now subordinated to divine love. As love of God grows, fear of punishment diminishes: the more one loves God, the less one

fears punishment. This is because attention shifts away from one's own good, which punishment threatens, and because love strengthens certainty of reward. Hope thus approaches certainty, as it ought. Fear should not diminish that certainty of hope; rather, as fear decreases, faith and confidence—though not identical with hope—grow ever stronger alongside it.

17. If we compare revealed divine teaching to a gold mine, we must say that only in its deepest layers—reached by but a few rare souls—is found that most precious and truly rare gold of wisdom. It is not present in a superficial knowledge of God's truth, for it appears in souls in proportion to their distancing from sin, in proportion to the degree to which the human soul becomes like Jesus Christ—drawing nearer to Him, becoming akin to Him.

That quality of the human soul which we call Divine Wisdom is, as it were, a kind of spiritual kinship with the divine Person of Jesus Christ. For Divine Wisdom is also a divine Hypostasis, a divine Person. And by what miracle—by what miracle of miracles—can Divine Wisdom, the divine Hypostasis, become or be made a quality of our intellect?

This is the problem above all problems, one that no human discourse can fully resolve. Perhaps we must await that moment

when "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Yet since the Word of God is accessible to us, and since it is fitting—indeed necessary—that our intellect penetrate the deepest mysteries of divine Revelation, how can we fail to marvel? How can we not stand in awe before this question: that a divine Hypostasis could become a quality of our understanding?

18. That love, common to all Christians and accessible to all, may exist in the human soul in three degrees, each higher than the other. It is fitting to set them forth here, so that in our own case we may apply to our spiritual illness the remedy suited to its condition. These three degrees of divine love correspond to the general pattern found in every division: beginning, middle, and end. Accordingly, the three degrees of love are the love of beginners, the love of those advancing, and the love of the perfect. These degrees are distinguished by the different tasks or occupations to which a person is led as he progresses in love.

In the first stage, a person must concern himself chiefly with turning away from sin and battling the passions that oppose love. Such is the love of beginners. It must be nourished like a small child, warmed and guarded against death and corruption—that is, against mortal sin.

In the second stage, a person's task is to act in love. The principal intention of the soul is then directed toward strengthening love and allowing it to grow. Like a child, it must be carefully nurtured and educated until it reaches the maturity of full human age.

In the third stage, the soul's task, occupation, or intention gradually becomes exclusively this one thing: to unite itself with God, to cling to Him, to rejoice in Him and to possess Him. Such is the love of the perfect, who, like the Apostle, desire to be loosed from this life and to be with Christ

19. Natural reason is not inactive in the knowledge of supernatural truth. Enlightened by faith, it carefully, devoutly, and humbly seeks—and with God's help attains—a certain understanding of divine mysteries; and that understanding is exceedingly precious and most useful.

In some respects reason arrives at such understanding through comparison with what it naturally knows; in other respects through the interconnection of the mysteries themselves and their relation to the ultimate end of man. Yet human reason never becomes capable of knowing or understanding these truths with the clarity with which it understands what belongs to its natural object of knowledge.

For divine mysteries, by their very nature, so surpass created reason that even when they are disclosed by revelation and accepted in faith, they remain as though veiled—surrounded, as it were, by a certain darkness of faith. They remain so as long as in this mortal life "we are away from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:6–7).

20. Between nature and the supernatural, between natural reason and the light of faith, there lie certain chasms in which there is an almost infinite multitude of unresolved problems and difficulties, impossible fully to express.

Saint Paul touches upon them when he contrasts Divine Wisdom with what passes for wisdom among men: "If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: 'He catches the wise in their craftiness' (Job 5:13). And again: 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain' (Ps. 94:11)" (1 Cor. 3:18–20).

21. Thus the supernatural is built upon nature. Grace does not destroy or alter the essence of nature; it sanctifies and elevates it. The divine supernatural law—the law of the Gospel—rests upon and perfects the natural law.

The whole structure, this "new creation" (as St. Paul says) of humanity elevated and sanctified by the divine life of grace, is manifestly a masterpiece beyond all possible masterpieces, for it is the work of the omnipotence and infinite wisdom of God the Word, who took upon Himself human flesh. Through His Word, God created the wondrous work of human nature; and after its fall, by a greater and higher miracle, He raised that fallen nature through grace—those natural foundations upon which the entire edifice of grace rests, that seemingly natural root from which the tree of grace grows.

We say "seemingly," because nature, when it becomes the foundation of grace—the root of that marvelous organism which is the supernatural—does not possess this from itself; it is God's gift. The first principle, the very seed of that organism, the smallest stone of that foundation, comes from heaven, not from earth. Therefore, one cannot use the words "foundation" or "root" in the sense that they still belong merely to nature. Insofar as nature becomes the basis of the supernatural, the seed

or root of the organism that is the work of grace, it is already a supernatural gift of God; it is already grace.

Yet this union, full of mystery, between nature and the supernatural—that boundary hidden somewhere in the depths of the human soul—is a mystery of faith, perhaps one of the most difficult to comprehend or even to imagine. For this reason, the doctrine of faith concerning divine grace is so full of nearly infinite difficulties, so rich in problems over which the human intellect has labored and sought understanding for long centuries, yet has never been able fully to resolve them or to lift the veil that covers these truths—truths which we now see only "in a mirror and in an enigma," as the Apostle says (1 Cor. 13:12)

22. The first work is love for one's neighbor within the family; and this brings to the family both happiness, strength, and God's blessing. If there were more love in our families, we would already have half of God's order in the community.

23. To learn how to pray is a very great lesson in life. A child who prays daily at home together with the parents can also be recognized in church by his devotion. Look at the children in church. You can immediately tell which one has devout parents and which has negligent ones. One child behaves reverently and

beautifully in church; another laughs, turns about, disturbs others, and does not even think about prayer. Each does as he has learned from his parents.

24. If in every family the husband and the wife, and little by little even the children—at least the older ones—would sincerely work so that love might increase within the family, would not life in the home become sweeter for everyone?

Take only one example. Let us rid ourselves, at least once and for all, of all curses and quarrels. Would it not be better? Do you think it is difficult, that it cannot be done? Just try it for a week. Tell one another: there will be no cursing; we will not swear. You will endure a week without curses. And after a week say again: another week. If you managed once, why not a second time? Whoever has not cursed for two weeks will endure a month. And whoever has gone a month without cursing will have already grown accustomed to living without it.

And thus one work of divine love toward one's neighbor in the home is accomplished. And do not think that this is a small thing. It is already significant before God and before men, for it is a sign that in that house, in that family, there live true and sincere Christians. A Christian home is not so much marked by holy images as by the Christian life of those who dwell in it.

25. In a broader sense, a work of mercy, like almsgiving, is everything that is given or done for one's neighbor for God's sake, taking into account his bodily and spiritual needs. In a narrower sense, these words refer only to what is given to the poor to satisfy their material needs.

In this sense, assistance given to one's neighbor is one of the most important social duties—one to which not only religion and the preaching of the Gospel draw attention, but also sociologists and philosophers. There is, however, an important difference between the philosophical and the Christian understanding of helping one's neighbor.

For the Christian, this help is an act of love for one's neighbor done out of love for God, or at least with regard to God. Materially, the almsgiving of the sociologist and that of the Christian is assistance given to a needy neighbor; but formally, the Christian act of mercy has a higher spiritual significance. It is directed by a higher, supernatural motive; it is illuminated by the light of Christian faith and divine grace.

26. One task completed—take up another. Establish common prayer in the home. I have written about this more than once. You probably thought that such common prayer was a very difficult thing. Perhaps now you might try.

Parents and children, servants as well—let them kneel in the morning and in the evening, or at least once a day, before the holy icon of the Mother of God, and aloud, slowly and distinctly, let them say the prayers. If possible, from a prayer book; if not, from memory.

27. We have joined the quality or virtue of evangelical simplicity with evangelical poverty, for these virtues are alike and closely connected. Both impart to one's surrender to Christ that character of unconditionality, wholeness, fullness, and sincerity which is necessary in order to avoid every form of deceit and even the slightest shadow of Pharisaism.

We shall not dwell on the question of which of the mentioned virtues are distinct in themselves. Each word, of course, has its own particular meaning; yet in substance they are either the same or very closely related.

Poverty consists in not overvaluing the goods of this world—or at least in valuing them rightly, that is, as secondary.

Simplicity, in its primary sense, means truthfulness, the absence of duplicity; thus a simple person is one who is not complicated or twisted, who proceeds in a straight line, whose conduct is consistent and directed directly toward the goal.

Sincerity means that words and deeds correspond to one's thoughts and intentions; it is the absence of deceit, intrigue, and cunning in dealing with others—a goodwill in one's attitude toward them.

Transparency (or brightness of soul) signifies that quality in which the heart is clear, open, luminous, concealing nothing—everything lies as it were in plain view; there are no hidden or crafty motives.

Righteousness is the same as the state of grace or living according to God's law. Innocence is the absence of sin. Honesty is conscientiousness in fulfilling the duties of justice toward others—one measure and one weight for all.

All these qualities or virtues we have gathered as an appendix to practical wisdom, because they pertain above all to the choice of means that lead to the end—that is, to a straightforward striving toward that end. One could also speak of these virtues in connection with the moral virtue of temperance, for all of them require mastery over the passions, and especially over the passion of desire for goods

28. The custom of reading Holy Scripture every day, even for a minute, should become the habit of every Christian family. That reading should be the daily nourishment of people. It is wholesome, healing food that strengthens; and it should largely replace what poor, blinded people consider a necessary daily sustenance—the reading of newspapers.

29. A nation that has scholars gains recognition and honor from others, and people are obliged to reckon with it.

30. For Christians it is certain that if the Most Holy Virgin Mary were to take this matter into her hands, together with all the difficulties connected with it, we would soon attain not only peace in general, but also a just and lasting peace. For everyone understands that a peace which did not take into account the needs of nations, and under which nations would consider themselves wronged and indeed be wronged, would not be peace at all, but rather the cause of new and ever greater complications and mutual hatred, which would inevitably lead to new wars.

31. Entrusting you to the love and mercy of Christ, we beseech our Savior that He grant our people, through Christian living and Christian labor, to attain a better future—to true and universal enlightenment, to sound material well-being, to moral strength and health in Christ Jesus, the Savior of the world.

In His holy Name, we impart to you all our Episcopal blessing †